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THE PRINCESS OF WALES

THE PRINCESS OF WALES

GRACE TRUMAN;

OR,

LOVE AND PRINCIPLE.

BY

MRS. SALLIE ROCHESTER FORD.

OF LOUISVILLE, KY

NEW YORK:

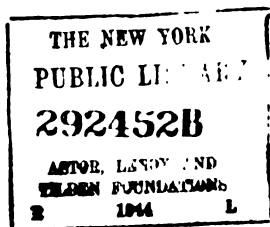
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TO

ELIZABETH T. PITTS,

My Loved and Venerated Grandmother,

WHO, BENEATH THE WEIGHT OF EIGHTY YEARS,

STILL CHERISHES, WITH CLEAR CONCEPTION AND UNABATED ZEAL,

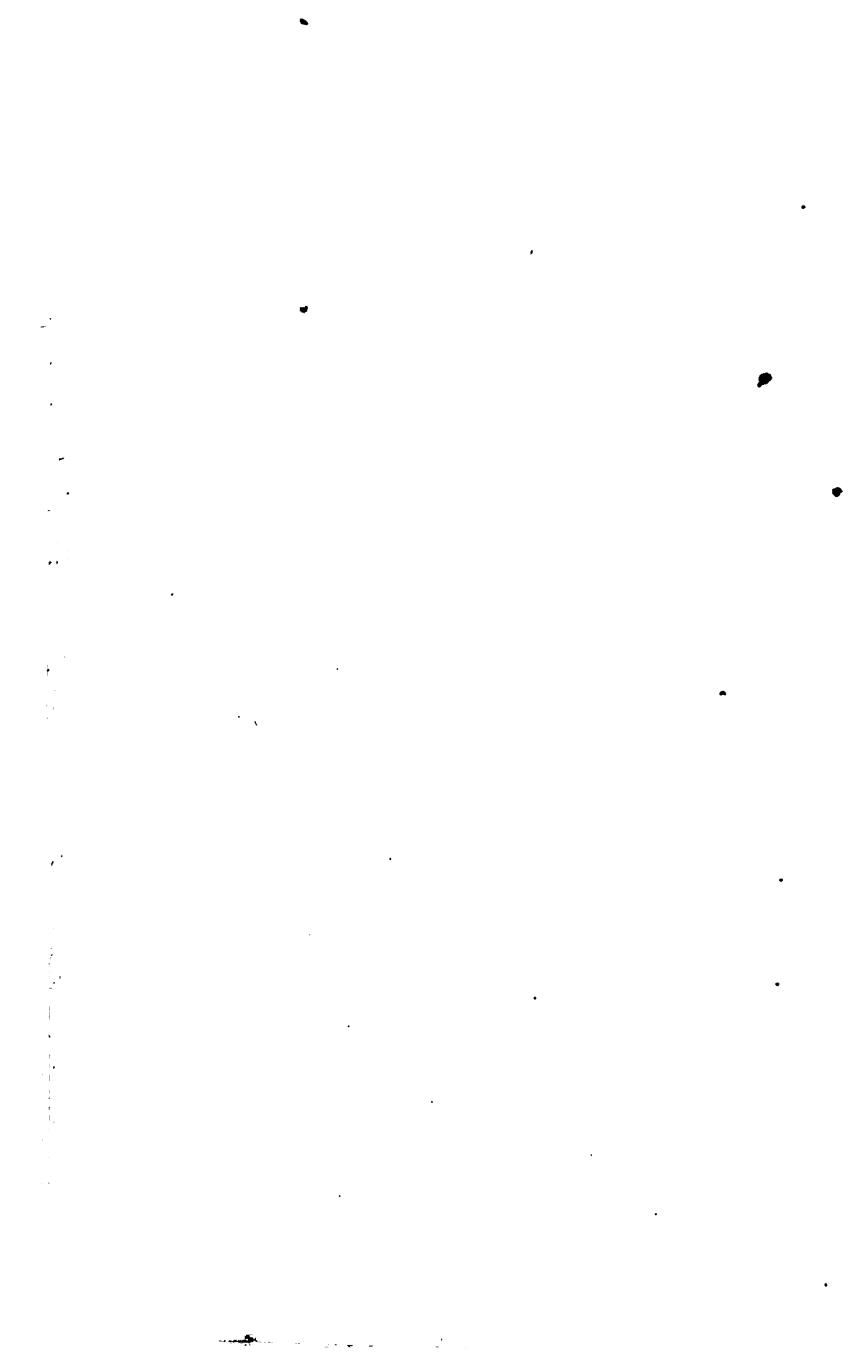
Those Principles

WHICH IN ORPHAN CHILDHOOD I LEARNED FROM HER LIPS,

THIS TRIBUTE TO THEIR ADVOCACY

IS AFFECTIONATELY INSCRIBED.

Sallie Rochester Ford.



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GRACE TRUMAN.

CHAPTER I.

THE WEDDING.

BRIGHTLY smiled the morn on "Cottage Home." From her dream-visited slumbers Grace Truman awoke to hail with subdued joy her bridal day.

That day completed her seventeenth year ! That day was to be to her the beginning of a new life, over whose coming hours love cast a radiant glory, tinged only by the dark thought, that joy, however unstained by sorrow, and hope, however glad, must find an end in death.

She made her morning toilet quietly, almost mechanically ; for her thoughts were busy with other things. With that proneness of the human mind to look into the future, she had turned from the momentous present to contemplate the new, strange picture of her coming life, spread out so dimly, yet so attractively before her.

She knelt to ask God, as a Father, to guide her aright, and keep her from forgetfulness amid her new-found happiness.

The glorious beams of the uprising sun, as they streamed through the window and fell on her bowed form kindled with new beauty her calm, sweet counte-

nance. Child-like resignation and trust marked the expression of that upturned face, as the lips murmured the fervent prayer.

Rising, she took her Bible, which had not yet been transferred from its place on the little stand in the corner to the traveling-trunk, and read a few verses from St. John which had often been a stay and consolation to her.

"Come," said old Aunt Dolly, as she met Grace descending the stairway, "come, Miss Gracey this is your weddin'-day and you ought to be a makin' things ready. Massa John will soon be here with the preacher. See, it is almost seven o'clock."

"You don't wish me gone, do you, Aunt Dolly?"

"No, no, Miss Gracey, I'm sorry you are going to leave us, but if you must go, I want you to be ready in time. You has a long journey to take."

"Not a long journey, Aunt Dolly, only thirty miles."

"Well, never mind, you must make haste and be prepared."

"But I forgot to ask you if you is going to be married by Massa John's preacher, or by parson Miller."

"By Father Miller, Aunt Dolly, you know he baptized me."

"Massa John don't believe in baptizin' folks like we do, but I think we's right, don't you?"

"Certainly I do, Aunt Dolly, but we will not talk about this now." And Grace moved toward the door of her mother's room.

"Good-morning, my daughter," said her father, rising from his seat and kissing her. "Are you well this morning. Your mother has just gone up to assist you in your preparation."

"Good-morning, sister Gracey," exclaimed little Willie, bounding into the room. "Is this the day you are going to get married? Well, I'm mighty sorry," said he as he nestled close to his sister's side, who took his fresh-washed hand in hers, and smoothed from his fair forehead the still wet locks. "But you'll give me and sister Ella plenty of candy and cake, won't you, out of mother's side-board? I asked Aunt Dolly for some yesterday, and she told me 'to wait till to-morrow and then I should have as much as I could eat.' O, I'm so glad to-morrow's come!"

Mr. Truman smiled at the child's earnestness. But a sad expression succeeded, as he thought of giving up his much-loved daughter to the protection of another. He knew her sensitiveness, and the deep, clinging affection of her heart. And he feared lest a chilling atmosphere might blight the unfolding bloom. He knew

"That life, however bright, must have its changing shadows."

A few neighbors, whom Grace had herself invited, soon came in, and while Mrs. Truman received them below, Grace gave the last touches to her plain but tasteful toilet.

"I wonder why Cousin Annie doesn't come," she said to herself, as she clasped the beautiful cameo, a present from her betrothed, and which had been selected by him because of a fancied resemblance to Grace in the exquisite face so delicately chiseled on its polished front.

"Has Cousin Annie come," she asked of Aunt Dolly, who very gently opened the door, as if afraid of startling her young mistress.

"Yes, ma'am, she is taking off her things in her moth-

er's room, and will be up presently. But how sweet you look, Miss Gracey, in that pretty dark dress, and that nice linen collar, so clean and white, with that pin in it, Massa John give you."

And she was lovely too ! that sweet young girl with her look of innocence and joy. Peri standing with crystallized tear before the throne of Allah was not more beautiful.

"Tell Cousin Annie to come up now, Aunt Dolly, I wish to see her before—"

"A happy good-morning to you, cousin," exclaimed Annie, as she threw her arms about Grace's neck, and kissed her flushed cheek. "Why, how agitated you look, my dear girl ; do calm yourself ! Are you not going to marry the very best of men ? And have you not told me dozens of times that you love him as well as you do your own doting father ? What if he does say your baptism is not more valid than his, and laughingly threaten to turn you Presbyterian, you are not afraid he'll succeed, are you ? If I were just on the eve of entering the paradise which is opening before you, I would not let such trivial matters as these throw a shadow over its radiant landscape, I assure you. Here, let me adjust this braid which seems scared out of its place by your agitation."

"But you know, Annie, Mr. Holmes's relations all think as he does, and I have heard him say his father was very unyielding in his religious views."

"Well, be unyielding too," said the merry-hearted Annie, who dared to think that Grace, if she was so young, had quite as good a right to her opinions as old Mr. Holmes had to his.

"And you know I am going with you to spend a few weeks in your new home, and if it is necessary, will plead your cause right nobly before the tribunal of 'the Old School' in all its majesty and power. I am not afraid, I tell you, for I believe with Father Miller, that when you know you are right you should always be faithful to your cause even before kings and princes. I am pretty well posted in his arguments and so are you ; so dear cousin you need not fear."

"Well, never mind now, my most noble defender, this is no time to advocate my cause and wage warfare against error. The presence of neither kings nor princes would reward your effort."

The little company were assembled in the parlor awaiting the appearance of the bridegroom and bride. A shadow of sadness gathered over the face of the aged minister as he sat by the window absorbed in thought. A thousand sweet yet touching memories swept through his mind as he hastily recalled the past. He had known from her earliest infancy the young and gentle creature that was so soon to take upon her that vow above all others the most sacred, and he loved her with a father's love. He had listened with delight to her childish prattle as she sat upon his knee in the quiet old parsonage, while he stroked back from her smooth brow the jetty locks and looked into the mild depths of those wonder-loving eyes, and patted in tenderest affection the peachy cheek. He had seen her in the country Sabbath-school through all her girlish years, the punctual attentive scholar, always wearing the same look of deep thought and quiet cheerfulness. He had seen her too bowed down even to the very earth, under a consciousness

of sin and transgression, and had spoken to her burdened soul words of heavenly truth and consolation, bidding her look away from Sinai's threatening brow to Calvary's peaceful summit lit up with the light of free, complete redemption "to every one that believeth." And then when she came up from beneath the dark cloud of fear by the law, rejoicing in the fullness of pardon and reconciliation to God through the death of his Son, he had led her down into the crystal wave, and there, in the presence of many witnesses, buried her beneath its yielding bosom in emblem of that death which had wrought out for her "this great salvation." And now, in the presence of these same witnesses he was to place upon her another vow of God's own instituting which should find its consummation only in death.

The group in front of the door parted to either side as the manly form of the bridegroom, with the young blushing girl leaning on his arm, entered and approached the hoary-headed minister, who, with deep emotion visible in his countenance and manner, rose from his seat and stood ready to perform the sacred office.

Passing his handkerchief slowly over his eyes, and driving back the flood of feeling which threatened to overwhelm him, he stepped forward and said,

"Sir, this young girl that leans on your arm, in thus presenting herself, makes known her willingness to leave the home of her childhood, the bosom of a fond father, the tender care of an affectionate mother—to part from all who have loved her, and all she has loved—to place herself under your protection, to walk by your side along the path of life—and now do you, here in the presence of God and these witnesses present, promise to be to her

a kind protector, a sympathizing friend, ever loving and comforting her, till death shall bid you part?"

He paused, and the "I do promise," was given.

The old man turned to the trembling girl. "Grace, do you take this man to be—your husband—" he could say no more; his voice grew tremulous with emotion, while tears stole down his time-worn cheek; and smothered sobs of sympathy were heard throughout the room.

She nodded assent.

"Let us pray," said the minister in a subdued tone.

"O thou, the All-wise God, our Father who didst thyself institute this sacred relation, so full of happiness and benefit to man—thou who didst smile on our first parents, in their Eden home, command thy favor to rest on this pair, who have taken upon them the solemn vow of marriage. May they ever be a blessing to each other; and all along life's changing way be guided and protected by thine omnipotent hand. May they be kept by thy power from all sin and danger, and when they shall pass from earth receive them into the bliss of heaven—we ask it all for the Redeemer's sake. Amen."

"God bless you, my dear children," said the father, as he took the hand of each, "may you ever be happy."

The mother's silent kiss, so full of meaning, was impressed on the brow of the trembling bride, and a cordial greeting was given to the happy bridegroom which made him feel that he was indeed welcomed as a son.

"My dear cousins, let me congratulate you," said Annie, as she kissed them both in her joyous manner.

"May sunshine ever be yours."

Warm wishes followed from all the company.

"I thought I would wait till all prior claims were met

before I asserted mine, Cousin Grace," said a young, handsome man, as he took the extended hand of the new-made cousin, "and may I not have the privilege of a relation," he asked, as he stooped to kiss her burning cheek. "Flowers for your pathway and peace for your bosom, Cousin John. Of all men, you should be the happiest, now that you have obtained your long-sought treasure," archly casting a sly glance at Grace, whose deepened color told she had felt the compliment which only served to embarrass her.

"Ain't you going to kiss us, Sister Gracey," said the half-crying, half-laughing Willie, as he presented himself before her with his little bordered handkerchief in one hand, and holding Ella with the other.

"Why, yes, you dear little creatures; and this is your brother John, won't you kiss him too?"

The children yielded rather reluctantly to the caresses of the brother, who they thought had come, as Jane had said that morning, for the sole purpose of taking their sister from them.

Refreshments were partaken of, and the bridal party made preparation to leave. With beating heart and trembling lips Grace bade adieu to the company, and to the aged minister, who in faltering tones commended her to God. "Be steadfast in the faith, my daughter, and be not overcome by temptation."

Aunt Dolly, with all the young ones of her charge, placed themselves at the gate that they might see the carriage as it wound its way up the road. As Grace grasped the friendly hand of the old servant and saw the big tears rolling down her cheek, she felt that in parting from her she was leaving a true friend. The dirty hand

of each little urchin was taken, and a kind word given to all. Annie laughed and chatted gayly, that she might keep back the tears of sympathy which were ready to betray her feelings.

"God bless you, my child," was all the father could say, as he folded her in his arms.

The weeping mother pressed her to her bosom, and silently committed her to God.

The door of the carriage was closed, and Grace turned from that home where she had so long been securely sheltered from all life's ills.

Heaven protect thee, thou innocent one ! The way of life is rough and thorny, and often may its flinty rocks wound thy onward-treading feet, and its sharp thorns pierce thy hand so eagerly extended to pluck its tempting fruits.

Truth must struggle against love, principle wrestle with fear, and faith, weakened by the contest, be ready to leave unpierced the dark shadows gathering over the future.

And shall the foe triumph over thee, thou child of many prayers, and thy banner of truth and right be left to trail in the dust ? Gather up thy strength for the battle, for it shall prove to thee a severe conflict. Be bold ; be steadfast ; be patient ; be trustful ; and God shall bear thee nobly through the struggle.

CHAPTER II.

THE JOURNEY.

GRACE cast a long, lingering look on that home in whose bosom she had so securely nestled, enfolded in the arms of love and watchfulness. The doting affection of her father, and her mother's feeble health had allowed her but little time to spend away from "Cottage Home." Nor had she wished it. Her trusting heart had met the height and depth of its desires in the wealth of tenderness and sympathy lavished upon her by parents who could fully understand and appreciate the wants of her noble nature.

She had passed a year and a half in Mr. Hall's school, in the village of Georgetown, and it was here that Mr. Holmes had first met her, while on a visit to his sister, who, although two years younger, was a great favorite with Grace. He had been attracted by the unassuming manner of the young girl, and he soon discovered that she united, with the most winning simplicity, a degree of self-reliance and determination, which, while it did not lead her to obtrude herself on the consideration of others, gave her confidence to assert her convictions of right, and nobly to defend them when attacked. He had also discovered that she was truly, consistently pious ; and this had increased his admiration and deep-

ened his interest, for he had always regarded piety as the true setting for the gems of moral excellence.

Of what worth are pearls beneath the ocean's brine, or diamonds hid in Borneo's rapid river? And how valueless do the most precious gems appear before the lapidary has imparted a polish, and given them an appropriate setting.

For a few moments they rode on in silence. Even the joyousness of the volatile Annie was subdued as she saw the shadings of sorrow and regret dimming the sunlight of Grace's usually radiant countenance : they were misty clouds enveloping the sun, through which his struggling beams must ere long shine forth gloriously.

Mr. Holmes regarded her with an expression of deep affection. He would have spoken words of comfort, but he knew not how. He put his arm tenderly around her, and bent on her a look, so full of love and sympathy, that her swelling heart took courage. Mr. Lewis fully appreciated the feelings of his new-made cousin, but he knew the agitated waters must subside of themselves—no human effort could calm their troubled bosom.

"How beautiful the morning is," said Annie, as she saw Grace turn her head toward the carriage window, and her eye rest with interest on the landscape without. "One could almost fancy we were in enchanted land, and you an inhabitant thereof, so charming is the effect of that little green traveling bonnet on your flushing cheek. But fairies and angels don't weep, do they? and I see the tiniest tear-drop lingering on your lid, as if undecided whether to follow its predecessors, or return to its crystal depths, and there reserve itself for a future occasion."

"I hope the occasion may be far distant that will recall the little fugitive from its hiding-place," said Mr. Holmes.

"O, it is a womanly weakness to weep, and a luxury too ! one you gentlemen rarely indulge, I believe. But you will not find Cousin Grace a Niobe, I assure you. She is not an April day, first sunshine and then shower, her tears are all meaning."

"Have you read the 'Culprit Fay,' Miss Annie? You remember that although he had no tears to shed, his was a harsh punishment. A mortal would have despaired of success under half the opposition."

"Yes, I read it during the intense heat of last summer, and I thought the punishment was not so severe, after all, as it gave him the opportunity of enjoying a cooling bath."

"What a beautiful production that is," said Grace, and her eye kindled with pleasure at the recollection of the elegantly-bound volume of American poets Mr. Holmes had given her on his first visit ; "the author certainly was a man of genius to produce such an exquisite poem in so short a time, and from such sparse materials."

"It is purely imaginative, and shows what beauty and power characterize a chaste and highly-cultivated intellect."

"I used to delight very much in fairy stories when I was a child. The Arabian Nights were my constant companions. I read them until I grew so sleepy I could no longer see, and then placed them under my pillow that I might begin again with the morning light. I then thought they were all true, and my heart would ache at the sufferings of the Black Prince and the sad

mishaps of Sinbad ; and I used to wonder if some kind genii would not come while I was asleep and put a Wonderful Lamp on my little table. It really gave me pain when I found it was all fiction ; the illusion was so beautiful. It is very sad to have our childish dreams thus dissipated, to awake from our blissful fancies to the realities of this matter-of-fact world."

"Why, Cousin Annie !" said Mr. Holmes, "you talk like one who had trod the journey of a long life, thick-set with misfortunes. We would not expect graver words from one who had drained the chalice of disappointment, and yet, if I mistake not, its bitter contents have scarcely touched those pouting lips. You are too young to have felt all your words imply."

"Well, I don't know how much of sorrow my words express to a man just come into the possession of all his heart desires. I suppose they do sound rather grating to the sensitive ear of happiness ; but although I can not boast of having quite escaped from my teens, I know very well that the dreamy enchantment of youth can never return."

"What a venerable-looking old man that was who married you," said Mr. Lewis to Grace (for Grace we must still call her, although she is now entitled to a more dignified appellation) ; "he is called Parson Miller, I believe. I had not the pleasure of an introduction, but I was quite attracted by his manner ; he seemed among the guests as one in the midst of his own family."

"He is a most excellent man," replied Grace, "and very much beloved, as well as highly respected, by his congregation ; indeed, his influence extends to the whole

neighborhood. Most of the company present this morning, were members of his church, and the greater number regard him as their spiritual father. He has been for nearly thirty years the pastor of our little church and there is no one in the whole country who does not know 'Father Miller,' as he is familiarly called."

"He is of the Baptist persuasion, I believe?"

"Yes," answered Grace, slightly reddening, and casting a furtive glance at Mr. Holmes; "he sometimes tells us he has been a Baptist more than forty years, and he has never yet seen the moment when he could have been any thing else. He is very firm in his principles."

"What do you think, Cousin John," said Annie, unheeding the deepening color of Grace's cheek, "I do believe she is afraid you will make a Presbyterian of her; look, how she is blushing."

"No, no, Annie;" and the blushes deepened as Grace answered, "I am not apprehensive of any such thing."

"You do not believe me gifted with such power?" he laughingly remarked to Grace. "Nothing is further from my intentions, Cousin Annie; I shall leave her to enjoy her own opinions. I do not wish to proselyte."

And why did the fair cheek of Grace crimson at any allusion to her religious principles? Was her pride wounded by the thought that she was a member of that "sect everywhere spoken against?" No. Raised in the bosom of a Baptist family, and surrounded by a community, the greater portion of which belonged to her own little church, she knew not that this was the case. Was she undecided in her belief, and had she misgivings that she might be wrong—that after all, she had regarded her peculiar tenets as possessing more weight and

solidity than they were entitled to? None of these things troubled her. She was a Baptist, and with Father Miller, she had not known the time that she could have been any thing else. But the words of her husband, "My father is a Presbyterian, and very unyielding in his belief," kept ringing in her ears, and already she could descry the cloud, no bigger than a man's hand, rising on her future horizon.

The road they traveled lay through a country but sparsely settled. Grace admired the beauties of the forests, which for miles lined either side of the way. She pitied the neglected children, who came in beavies from every road-side cabin to stare at the carriage as it passed by. It was the first time any of them had seen a vehicle of more pretensions than the peddler's wagon, with its saffron-colored advertisement resting on the vermilion background, and as the carriage passed some of them would throw up the remains of their worthy sire's old hat, and halloo as only children can; while others, struck dumb with amazement, stood motionless.

"Poor little creatures," said Grace; "what a pity they can not be educated."

The attentive manner and kindling eye of her husband, as he hung on her words, spoke more plainly than language could have done, the deep love and admiration he felt for her. Annie enjoyed every thing exceedingly; and her laugh rung out merrily as the sudden jerks of the carriage, passing over the ledges of rocks which marked parts of the way, would cause her to play "Butt best, who can" with Cousin John on the opposite seat. Mr. Lewis joined Grace in her admiration of the grand old forests, the brilliant sky, and laughing breeze.

There was no inn by the way, so they had to dine beneath the smiling heavens on a table of nature's own spreading. They passed what claimed to be a "house of accommodation," but Annie declared "it was receiving patronage under false pretenses," and she "would not eat there for all the world." It certainly gave no outward evidences of its right to such consideration except the quaint old sign, which rested between the forks of a veteran apple-tree, standing near the rickety front gate. Mr. Lewis thought the old sign might have been borrowed from a neighboring town, "judging from the two old bachelor-looking poplars which shaded the loophole windows, and which seemed to be growing from the flag-stone pavement. Not true to nature."

Mrs. Truman had abundantly filled a traveling basket with nice luncheon; and the party halted by the wayside to refresh themselves and rest the already tired horses. Ben took from the box some ears of corn to give to "his boys," as he proudly called the noble looking bays which, loosed from the carriage, were soon enjoying his providence. "Uncle Ben," who had long been a family servant, and entitled, as he thought, to the most unreserved familiarity, whispered in his master John's ear, "that he had got a mighty pretty wife, shoore!"

Annie brought some water from a spring, which gushed from the foot of a large oak-tree, and Mr. Lewis declared she looked like a Naiad bending over the purling stream, with her silver goblet sparkling with dripping diamonds. The goblet was a present to Grace from her parents; and in the front, encircled by shining leaves of myrtle, was exquisitely engraved her name, "Grace Truman."

"That tree," said Mr. Lewis, pointing to the one from which the little spring burst in gurgling music, "reminds me of my early childhood. My mother used to take me, at the twilight hour, and bowing beneath the shade of a venerable oak, whose long branches swept her window, would teach me to repeat my evening prayer; and never since, 'mid the thoughtlessness of childhood, or the temptations of youth, have I forgotten that mother's voice, that holy twilight calm; their memory lingers with me yet."

Annie looked up, surprised. She had not supposed the pleasant, cheerful Mr. Lewis, capable of such deep feeling, and her merry laugh sobered into silence. A tear glistened in Grace's eye. She was not an orphan, but she had stepped forth from her father's threshold to try the realities of a new life. Mr. Holmes, perceiving her feelings, changed the conversation.

"Grace, you remember Fannie?"

"O yes, well! I see her now, as she came the first evening she entered school, and laying her hand tenderly on mine, asked me if I would not be her friend. I promised her I would; and ever after when thoughts of home would sadden her spirit, or annoyance ruffle her usually placid temper, she would come and tell me all her grief."

"I feel half indebted to her for my newly-acquired treasure. It was she who told me of her 'friend Grace'; and such glowing descriptions did she give of her kindness and love, that I became intensely desirous to see this paragon of excellence."

"You have no reason to regret the gratification of that 'intense desire,' Cousin John, have you?"

"None. It led to the event of my life which shall ever crown it with happiness."

"How confidently he speaks," said Annie, laughingly, addressing herself to Mr. Lewis. "I suppose some good geni has spread out before him the page of his future destiny, unmarred by spot or blemish. Let me repeat my morning congratulation: 'May sunshine *ever* be yours.'"

Our travelers, having partaken of dinner, made preparations to resume their journey. "The bays" were watered, and Uncle Ben remarking that "he thought it was high time they were off," put them to the carriage with noticeable alacrity. When all were seated, and the door fastened, he declared he "would have to drive mighty fast to get there in time for the ladies to rest;" and suiting the action to the word, he mounted the box with all haste, and giving his accustomed whistle, accompanied by a few warning flourishes of his whip, turned into the main way; and they were soon pursuing their journey at a gait almost alarming, considering the rough state of the road.

Annie laughed heartily as the scenes of the morning were re-enacted. Mr. Lewis endeavored to remonstrate with "Uncle Ben," but all to no purpose. He no doubt felt the responsibility and dignity of his office, and each new mention of the matter only served to renew his resolution. Mr. Holmes's silence seemed to favor him, and on he went, regardless of the many rocks which, under other circumstances, would not have opposed themselves in vain.

"Well, Mr. Lewis, you must admit there is one advantage gained from our rapid speed, that of increased

color ; look at Cousin Grace ! the bloom of the morning is reappearing on her cheek."

"Yes, Miss Annie, it certainly increases a lady's beauty to add the rose to her bouquet of charms ; indicating, as it does, physical health and vigor, it also tells us of the happiness which must flow from this source."

Grace had grown less and less talkative as they approached their destination, and Mr. Lewis very well understood why it was the rose-hue was deepening on her cheek ; it denoted vigor—not of body, but of mind.

Thoughts she wished not to betray, were busy in her mind, and their tell-tale fingers traced in characters too glowing not to be observed, their results on her snowy cheek. She looked back to the home she had left, and a feeling of regret stole through her throbbing heart ; she looked forward to the home she was nearing, and visions of fear and uncertainty shadowed the coming future. She doubted herself. Would she be able to discharge all her duties as wife, daughter, sister ? Could she, as old Father Miller had enjoined, "be bold and not yield to temptation ?" She knew that she was young, very young, and it would be expected of her, in matters that involved disputation, to acquiesce with child-like simplicity, and not by argument to give a reason for her belief. She thought, too, of the trials of the evening ; the meeting with Mr. and Mrs. Holmes ; of being introduced to a company of strangers ; for she felt that, as the bride of Mr. Holmes, she would be the cynosure of all eyes ; and she was apprehensive lest she should not favorably impress those who were hereafter to be either her friends, giving her sympathy and counsel, or with unforgiving heart deny her her just meed of love.

The desire to appear well to others is natural to the human breast. Who can look into his own bosom and deny its presence? Various motives prompt the desire, and it is right or wrong as these motives are virtuous or unholy. The ambitious man strives for it that he may win fame; the sycophant, that he may be benefited; the miser, that he may reap golden gain; the Christian, that he may do his Master's will in winning, by his influence, souls to Christ; the young and blushing girl, that she may meet with appreciation and sympathy.

"See," said Mr. Holmes, "yonder is the spire of our village church; a few minutes more and we shall be at home."

Grace bent her eyes in the direction he pointed out, and her heart beat more violently as she saw the outline of the church resting against the clear blue sky. Mr. Holmes observed her increased agitation, and putting his arm gently around her, laughingly remarked, "that she must not be alarmed at the idea of affording matter for village gossip for the next nine days to come."

"Why, Cousin John, you speak as if gossiping was a profession in your town. I had formed a better opinion of your 'church-going community,' as I have heard you call it."

"I assure you, Miss Annie, that our village, pleasant as it is in many respects, is not free from this characteristic curse. We have in our midst these harpies of other men's good names, and they seem to have adopted for their motto that old but expressive phrase, '*Ne sutor ultra crepidam*,' so unremitting are they in their malevolent vocation."

As Mr. Lewis finished speaking, they entered the vil-

lage, and as they passed along, faces of anxious curiosity were thrust from doors and windows. Little children bounded into the houses exclaiming, "they have come, they have come!" Maidens peeped from behind window curtains; and old men, with eyesight dimmed by time, and curiosity quickened by increasing age, stood still on the pavements and peered as best they could into the carriage. As they had to go the whole length of the principal street, most of its occupants were favored with a glimpse of the veiled forms of the ladies.

Grace glanced from the carriage window as they drove into the yard, and saw Mr. and Mrs. Holmes standing in the porch, with Fannie in the foreground.

While the carriage door was being opened, Grace cast a hasty glance at her parents. Their pleasant, beaming faces, reassured her, and she stepped from the carriage with a look of confidence and love.

"This is our daughter," said old Mr. Holmes, as his son handed Grace to the porch. "Let me welcome you home!" and he gave her a warm kiss and a hearty shake of the hand. Mrs. Holmes smiled sweetly as she greeted her blushing daughter, and Grace felt the influence of that benevolent expression sink deep into her heart. It was but a smile, yet it spoke volumes of tenderness, and inspired her with a trust and hope that words would have failed to create. Fannie loaded her with kisses, and the little brothers and sisters put up their pouting lips and called her "Sister Grace." Annie was introduced by Mr. Lewis, and received from each a pleasant welcome.

Being fatigued from their ride, the ladies were shown to their rooms that they might refresh themselves with

rest and sleep, preparatory to the evening. Grace was struck with the perfect taste and neatness that characterized the room which was henceforth to be hers—the snowy bed, with its airy muslin hangings, the highly polished bureau, free from any trace of finger-prints and ornamented with a handsome pin-cushion, on which was delicately painted a wreath of flowers, inclosing in letters of shining gold, “To Sister Grace, from Fannie. A vase of violets and spring roses, on either side of the cushion, attested her remembrance of Grace’s love for these beautiful flowers; and over the mantel there hung two landscape drawings, one, of the old Academy, with its grounds and walks; the other, a sketch of Widow Harris’s quiet cottage that stood just without the village, and which the two girls used very much to admire in their evening walks.

Grace was carried back to the pleasant days she had spent in Mr. H.’s school, and as she passed over scene after scene, the glad remembrances made her eye sparkle with increased brilliancy, and she could scarcely realize that she was not a school-girl, but a bride, away from her father’s house, in the home of strangers.

“Come, Cousin Grace,” said Annie, “you had better be preparing for the future than indulging in memories of the past. You seem to forget that there is anything to do but stand and gaze at those pictures. They are very beautiful, I admit, but you should remember your business is now to rest and not to wander ’mid scenes of by-gone days. Miss Holmes, I think you will have to remove these pictures till the evening has passed, or Cousin Grace will not be able to seek the rest she so much needs.”

Mrs. Holmes and Fannie assisted the ladies to remove bonnets and mantles, and seeing that they had every thing necessary, and to shut out the evening sun, Annie let fall the fleecy curtain, and the travelers were left to recruit their exhausted energies by sleep. Annie soon sunk into a profound slumber ; but Grace, although so weary, could not rest. She remained with her eyes closed, but her excitement was such that it entirely expelled the influence of the drowsy god ; and when in an hour after Fannie entered the room to tell them it was time to begin their evening toilette, she found her flushed and nervous.

Annie faithfully performed the part of bride's-maid, and to every entreaty of Grace to attend to her own toilette, she would answer, " O, never mind me, I shall look well enough.

" Here, let me put this pure white rose beneath this shining braid, it is sufficient ornament for a child-bride like you ; really, I never saw you look so like a youthful sylph as you do now, enveloped in the folds of that snow-white muslin, with that emblem of purity sleeping on its ebony bed. I'll wager you never looked so beautiful in all your life before ; I scarcely believe Cousin John will know you."

Fannie felt that Annie's words were true, she had never seen Grace look half so lovely.

Mrs. Holmes came with her sweet smile, so characteristic of her loving heart, to see if the ladies were ready for the parlor ; and as she moved about so gently, and yet so determinedly, with that pleasant face so full of heart language, Grace felt she must love and respect her. Her soul went out in affection toward her who

henceforth would have a claim upon her second only to that of her husband. She would willingly have trusted to her keeping the dearest secrets of her bosom, feeling that in her confidence she was safe.

When Grace entered the parlor, leaning on the arm of her husband, all eyes were directed toward her, and whatever different shades of opinion might have been entertained respecting her, all had to concede that she was very pretty. Her youthful appearance, as she advanced into the room, gentle, yet unreserved manner, her fine form draped in simple white muslin, becomingly worn, aside from her sweet face, would have made her attractive to all who could appreciate the "poetry of form and motion." The brilliancy of expression which sometimes marked her countenance when excited, now lit up her well-formed features, but was kept in control by her habitual self-respect, so that it served only to lend beauty to a face ever beautiful. It was the effulgence of the sun robbed by the fleecy cloud of all its garish brightness.

Mr. Holmes introduced her to many of his friends, not hurriedly, as is frequently done, passing from party to party in such a manner as to confuse all, but allowing time for interchange of thought and feeling as well as words.

Annie looked neither like a queen nor a fairy, but like a good, kind-hearted girl as she was. Her dress, similar to that of Grace, became well her noble figure, and the white rose-buds rested beautifully among the braids of her rich brown hair. Her face wore its usual expression of mirth and gladness, and her merry laugh as it sounded from the opposite side of the room, told Grace that she

had found vent for the joyousness of her heart. Mr. Lewis appeared unwilling to resign her to the care of another, though it must have been evident to him from the dissatisfied glances many of the young gentlemen gave him, that they, at least, thought he was indulging too far in monopoly.

Mrs. Holmes moved among her guests, shedding pleasure and enjoyment wherever she went. She was known and beloved by all the villagers. A dispenser of kind smiles and of that charity which does not expend itself in words, but deeds, which brings in its train food and raiment, she was regarded by old and young as a friend and benefactor.

Old Mr. Holmes observed, in passing from the parlor to the dining-room, Grace on the porch with her husband, in conversation with Mr. Gordon, the village pastor.

“Do you know my daughter is a Baptist, and believes in close communion, Mr. Gordon? I can’t tell how she and John will settle it—but the fact of the business is, we must make her a Presbyterian, and that will set matters straight.”

Grace smiled as he finished, but her husband read the effect of the words in the increased color of her cheek. Mr. Gordon observed it, and made no reply except a smile accompanied by a slight inclination of the head. They had just been speaking of the religious interest in their respective localities, but as the remarks were of a general nature the conversation passed pleasantly.

Unwilling to pursue the turn the conversation had taken, Mr. Gordon embraced the opportunity, while old Mr. Holmes was making some remarks to his son, to

retreat to the parlor. The old gentleman having a demand in the dining-room, passed on, saying, "Well, well, we will settle the matter some other time!"

Refreshments such as characterize the liberality and good common sense of an independent man of wealth, were served with simple elegance and care, and the company partook of their host's kind cheer, free from the many restraints imposed by an occasion of this kind in the city.

The evening passed agreeably to all, and Grace forgot, while engaged in conversation with her pleasant new-made friends, that she was not at home, surrounded by those she had so long known and loved. The only thing to mar her happiness was the remark of her father, which to her sounded ominous of future trouble, and in the pauses of conversation she found herself wondering what the end would be. "Be firm, and do not yield to temptation, my daughter," echoed through her heart, and she girded herself with the resolution to do her duty and leave consequences with him who seeth the end from the beginning—who guideth aright all who trust in his strength.

Annie declared to Fannie, as they conducted Grace to her chamber, that she had a delightful time, and spoke in the most complimentary manner of the many charming acquaintances she had formed during the evening.

"You are weary, sister," said Fannie, "we will retire." They kissed her a good night and left the room.

Grace sat gazing on the painting of the old Academy for some minutes; then taking her Bible, which it had been her wont to read nightly, since her father had given it to her on the day of her baptism, she turned to the

sixty-second Psalm, "Yes, God is my rock and my salvation, he is my defense, I shall not be moved," she said, as she closed the book and laid it aside. Then kneeling, she in prayer committed her ways to him who has promised to guide with unfailing love all who seek the shelter of his wing.

CHAPTER III.

GRACE IN HER NEW HOME.

As was the wont in Mrs. Holmes's household, the bell was rung at six o'clock for morning prayers. Believing that method is indispensable for the proper training of a family, and that much of the happiness and prosperity of her husband and children, as well as of her domestics, depended upon the regular observance of the rules she had adopted in the outset of her married life, she had felt it her duty to teach, by example, as well as precept, the importance of punctuality in all things.

Hers was not that firm, strait-laced management, which invests every thing with that touch-me-not air, which makes you afraid, when you are seated, to rise, and when you are up, to sit down, lest, perchance, you might move a hair's breadth beyond its proper limit, the antiquated Windsor, standing in *statu quo* dignity against the wall—but that firm, convincing regimen, which carries with it its own arguments, and which makes you feel, without theorizing on the subject, that it is the most agreeable, most rational, and most profitable of all systems.

In the observance of this duty, Mr. Holmes had always been very strict. The family altar was set up in the log cabin, and through all changes, morning and

night, the household had gathered round it to return thanks to God for his protection, and beseech his continued guidance. Every member was expected to be present, from the oldest down to "little Neddie," who, though not able yet to read, could hold his hymn-book in his hand and look on while the others sung.

Mr. Holmes read a Psalm and gave out the first lines of that comforting hymn, beginning "The pity of the Lord." It had always been a great favorite with Grace; she had selected it the last time she and her father had sung together. Singular coincidences, thought she, that this should be the last song sung in my own old home, and the first in my new one. It awakened a train of touching remembrances, and she went quite through with the dear old familiar words, almost unconscious of what she was doing. She remembered that quiet Sabbath evening—the presence of that wasted hand, and the beaming joy of that pallid face, as the low, sweet voice of her dying sister repeated,

"And children's children ever find.
Thy words of promise sure."

With what suddenness and power do little things bring back to us memories that long have slept. The spring is touched, and the whole panorama of our past years is spread out before us in life-like colors. We see it, we read it, we *feel* it. A sound, a flower, a word, a face; and in a moment we escape from the realities of the living present, and wander amid the by-gones of the resurrected past. Our mother, our childhood's home, all of joy, all of sorrow that our heart has known, is before us with the vividness of actual existence. Ah,

Memory, thy power is great ! who can understand its exercise ?

Mr. Gordon, as an intimate friend of the family, called at an early hour. He had been pleased with the conversation of Grace the previous evening, and wished to extend his acquaintance. Moreover, the next Sabbath week was communion season at his church, and as a pastor of the congregation of which her husband was a member, he deemed it his duty to ascertain her feelings with regard to this ordinance in order that he might know how to act in the future. He remembered a conversation that had taken place between old Mr. Holmes and his son a few weeks previous to the marriage, and which had given him some insight into the character of her whom he hoped, before long, to convince of her "*blind sectarianism*."

"Well, well, John," said the old gentleman, "I have no earthly objection to your girl, except that she is a Baptist, and I suppose, of course, a close communionist. But I reckon we needn't mind that much ; she is young and will not be hard to convince of her error, and as there is no Baptist church here she will soon be willing to come to the Lord's table, even if it is set by Presbyterians. Besides, Brother Gordon, if she needs any arguments, you are well posted up and can give them. I know you can soon bring her over. The fact of the business is, I was always so strong in my faith that I never went searching after reasons. People only want to be well informed to give up that old bigoted notion of close communion.

Strange philosophy, thought Mr. Gordon, but he made no reply : Mr. Holmes was an elder in the church.

"But, father, Grace is not only a strong believer in the doctrines of her church, but she can also give very good reasons for her belief."

"Tut, tut, John, what do you know about good reasons? you never studied theology."

"Neither has old Parson Miller, I suppose, and yet he has convinced me that the Baptists are not so far wrong, after all, as we Presbyterians suppose them. I was astonished to find, in a conversation I had with him a few weeks ago, how much proof they can produce in support of their peculiar tenets, and that, too, from the Bible. I had always thought that, as a denomination, they were ignorant and bigoted; but he proved to me that I had been laboring under a mistake. He used neither Hebrew, nor Greek, nor Latin; he did not give me long quotations from the "Fathers," nor point to the great men who had been Baptists, but took the Bible, and argued from that. Mr. Truman says he preaches the best doctrinal sermons he ever heard, and that his members are well informed with regard to the distinguishing features of their sect; so you need not hope to find Grace such a ready convert as you expect. I really do believe I should have been shaken in my belief if I had listened much longer."

"Tut, tut, John, we can very well understand why the matter was so clear to you—a man in love can be convinced of any thing his sweet-heart thinks is right."

"Perhaps, as Mr. Holmes says, you found more argument in Miss Truman's eyes than in Parson Miller's words," pleasantly remarked Mr. Gordon.

The young gentleman smiled, but made no reply.

So the call of Mr. Gordon had a twofold object—to

inquire, as a friend, after the health of the family, and, if possible, to ascertain the state of Grace's religious feelings and the extent of her views. He was convinced from her remarks of the previous evening that she was pious—was a Christian as well as a professed follower of the meek and lowly Jesus ; but he judged her very yielding in her opinions, and thought that the influence of her husband's family and of the society into which she would be thrown, together with his conclusive arguments, would soon be sufficient, if not to change her views entirely, at least so to modify them as to make her willing to unite with his church. This being accomplished, the matter was ended. And aside from other considerations, he deemed it a very serious, as well as an unpleasant state of things, for the heads of a family to differ in religious belief. And he felt for this reason, if for no other, that it was his duty to use his influence in effecting a change in her opinions.

Annie and Fannie were seated at the piano when he entered. Bidding them good-morning, he passed to the further side of the room, where Grace was sitting with her husband and father.

"Good-morning, Brother Gordon," said old Mr. Holmes, "we were just talking about you."

"And what were you saying, Brother Holmes ? doing me justice, I hope," he mildly observed, taking the chair politely handed him by Grace.

"I was just telling my daughter that our quarterly meeting is near at hand, and she must lay aside all prejudice and come and commune with her husband."

"And what does she say ?" he pleasantly asked.

As he spoke he bent a searching glance on Grace, as

if to read the inmost thoughts of her soul, but she betrayed no emotion, save a slight flushing of the cheek. She endeavored to suppress this, but it would come. She wished now, as she had often done before, that she could stay the crimson current in its course, but it would burst the bounds of her will, and rush headlong until arrested by the texture of her cheek, where, mingling with its snowy whiteness, it diffused a glorious tint over its delicate canvas, never rivaled by pencil of master-painter. Her husband noticed her agitation with feelings of deep sympathy, and a shadow of dark foreboding ; but he said nothing.

"She says she must be convinced that she has a *right* there, before she can come. Did you ever hear of any thing like that? Convinced that she has a right ! Just as if every Christian hasn't a right to come to the Lord's table ! I have told her it is not our table, and if it was, that we would not be guilty of such a want of liberality ; and that we have no right to keep any body away from the Master's table, when he has commanded all his followers to come."

"I think," said Grace, strong in her consciousness of right, "that only those should come who have been invited by the Ruler of the feast, and that in the way of his own appointment."

"And what way is that, do you think ?"

"Through the door—baptism."

"Well, we all believe that ; and you certainly don't mean to say that we haven't been baptized ?"

She hesitated a moment, as if uncertain what to reply ; then looking up at the old gentleman, her face beaming with candor and earnestness, she said, "I

believe there is but one baptism, and that is immersion."

"Tut, tut, tut ! you don't think water washes away our sins, do you ? that going down into a dirty pond, or a muddy creek is any better than to have some clean water sprinkled on your forehead ? Don't you know baptism is only a sign, child ? and I am sure the more gently it's done, the better. I wonder you Baptists can't see this. The fact of the business is, the thing is so plain to me, I can't tell why other people don't see it."

"I suppose you think that in this every body should act for themselves. I regard it as a matter of conscience, and not of choice."

"Certainly, certainly ; I want every body to act for themselves, if they will act according to common sense, but I never could see any reason in people's going down into the water to be dipped under, head and ears. It looks worse to me than any thing in the world."

Grace was about to reply, but the entrance of Mrs. Holmes and Mr. Lewis prevented her. Mr. Gordon perceiving that Mr. Holmes was becoming somewhat excited, was glad of the interruption. He did not consider the occasion a fit one for the introduction of his logic, so he wisely forbore any further remark, determining within himself, to resume the discussion at the earliest convenience, for he knew when the citadel was once attacked, it was best, if possible, to take it by storm, and thereby prevent any time for preparation or reinforcement. Should this fail, he would place himself with all his artillery of reason before the gate, and there remain until the enemy, worn out by the long siege, would be compelled to surrender.

Annie had been turning over the leaves of the large music-book, and, with Fannie, admiring the sentiment of the songs, but the heightened tone of Mr. Holmes had attracted her attention, and she turned to see what was the matter. Grace's expression, together with the last words of the old gentleman's remark, told her all. "Why can't she be left to her own opinions, at least until she shall be initiated in her new home? must the persecution begin so soon?" she mentally exclaimed, while she bent upon her agitated cousin a look of sympathizing tenderness. "They have no right to torment her in this way; I will tell her not to give up—but then perhaps this would not be right; they are all of one faith, and why should she resist, when it will only bring trouble to her sensitive heart?"

Ah, Annie! you have forgotten your advice; did you not counsel, "be unyielding," too?

The presence of Mr. Lewis imparted a feeling of cheerfulness to the company, because of his pleasant countenance, as well as the agreeable turn he gave to the conversation.

"Really, Cousin Grace, I do not believe you have recovered from the effects of yesterday's journey; Miss Annie, too, is looking slightly pale; John appears neither improved nor damaged, he is not one to be influenced by trifles. For my own part, I feel like a new man. I have been so long pent up in my bachelor study, with stacks of grim-looking books around me, that a taste of fresh air, and a little jolting over country roads has given elasticity to my spirits, and vigor to my mind.

"You certainly have scope for the full exercise of rustic tastes and habits here, Cousin Ed. The glimpse of

the surrounding country that I caught from my window this morning, bade me pronounce it beautiful, very beautiful. That meadow beyond the church, with its silvery brooklet, and the dark background of woodland beyond ; and the church, with its hand-tipped spire ever pointing heavenward, seeming from its elevation to keep guard over the village, form a picture to my mind very attractive."

"Yes, our country is lovely ; and an admirer of nature will find its charms inexhaustible. But old Boreas has kept in such strict attendance at my door-latch, and not being willing to cultivate our already too extended acquaintance, I confined myself as far as practicable, through the past winter, to my arm-chair and mute instructors ; and you know the gyves of habit once thrown round us, it takes a strength like that of Samson to break them."

"How guarded then should we be in forging for ourselves new bonds, Edwin, lest at any time we find them too strong to be broken."

"Very true, aunt, but the work goes on so imperceptibly, that before we are aware of it, we find ourselves bound hand and foot."

A rap was heard at the door, and two young ladies were announced. The day was spent in entertaining visitors. Some called out of respect to the family, some because of the friendship they felt, and many from curiosity. Various were the rumors with regard to the chosen of him who had been the admired of all the marriageable ladies of the village. His position as the eldest son of the wealthiest citizen in the whole community, and his fine appearance, together with that

pleasant, unassuming manner, which at all times characterized him, caused him to be denominated by all "a first-rate chance." Many a village maiden had cast a longing eye to the handsome brick mansion, resting so proudly in the midst of its surrounding evergreens, and wondered if she should ever be so fortunate as to become an occupant.

Mr. Lewis and the minister remained to dinner. The subject of the morning was not again alluded to. In the evening, after the ceremony of receiving visitors had ended, Annie and Fannie, with Mr. Lewis for an escort, sallied forth to reconnoiter the village.

"This is a charming prospect," said Annie, as they rested in the meadow on their return from their walk. "I think I have seen but few more beautiful views than the one before us." And it was very lovely in its quietness, while the declining sun threw over its calm features a soft and glorious brilliancy. Below stood the village, with its clean streets and white-washed houses. It was comparatively old, yet there were manifest but few signs of decay. The hand of neatness had touched up every tenement until the whole appeared to be of recent date. To the right was the mansion of Mr. Holmes, with its nice out-buildings and gently-sloping yard, well filled with evergreens, above which the old oaks reared aloft their leafy fronts. To their left, and forming a semicircle in the rear, was the woodland which had for years been the park of the village. Thither at evening would the young and old resort, to while away a pleasant hour after the labors of the day.

Fannie, stooping, plucked a meadow violet, and gave it to Annie.

“‘They bloom in beauty everywhere,’ Miss Annie. One would think the old poet had looked on our quiet retired world when he wrote that line ; look around you, and see, the whole earth is radiant with their happy faces ; for it is literally true with regard to it. Wouldn’t you judge so, Miss Annie ?”

“I have met them wherever I have gone. I observed them as we came along yesterday, lifting up their tender eyes from every fence corner, and meadow-flat ; and in your uncle’s yard they grow in lavish profusion, bestudding the emerald carpet with gems of purest amethyst ; and now around me, whichever way I turn, I meet their sweet faces smiling me a welcome.”

The day had been one of excitement and fatigue to all, and an early hour was proposed for rest. The family assembled in the parlor for evening thanksgiving. Mr. Gordon led in prayer.

“He can not mean me,” said Grace to herself, as fervently he prayed, that all who were in error might soon be led to renounce it and turn to the paths of truth. “I can not be in error ; surely what I believe is taught in God’s holy word. If my feet have strayed, O Father, lead me by the influence of thy Holy Spirit into that perfect way whose end is eternal life. Keep me from temptation ;” and the words of Father Miller flashed through her mind, and most earnestly she besought God to grant her his guidance, that she might be kept from sin in whatever form it might present itself.

“What is the matter, cousin,” said Annie, as she threw her arms around the neck of the weeping girl. Grace had retired to her room, and there the emotion which she had repressed by violent effort, found relief in tears.

"You know it all, Annie ; you heard my father's remarks this morning, and Mr. Gordon's prayer to-night. Do you think he could have meant me when he sought forgiveness for those who were misled ? I can not be wrong," sobbed the agitated girl. "Do you think he could have alluded to me ? O, Annie, are my troubles to begin so soon ?"

"No, no, my dear, you are too apprehensive."

Annie knew and felt it all, yet what could she advise ? To her the thought of Grace being made miserable, simply because she was a Baptist, was a dreadful one ; and yet she could not shut her eyes to the truth of the fact, that this was the only alternative, if she did not acquiesce in their views. She had better yield at once, and thus spare herself suffering. But what would Father Miller say ? what would her parents think ? These thoughts passed in rapid succession through her mind. She knew not of the high emotion which actuated her cousin's heart—a sincere desire to do the will of him who had bought her with his own precious blood. Annie was not a Christian !

"I can not advise you how to act," she said, as she kissed the burning cheek, and smoothed back the hair from the forehead of the sobbing girl ; "you know far better than I can tell you. I had thought it would have been an easy matter to repel any attack, but it has been so sudden, so serious. But never mind," said she, assuming an air of playfulness, "I will come to your assistance the next time, and if nothing else will do, we'll send for Father Miller to come down and turn *them* from the error of *their* way. But you must not

distress yourself so about it ; dismiss it from your mind and get to sleep as fast as you can. Dear Grace !”

She kissed her a second time, and bidding her forget her troubles, left the room.

Grace sat for a few moments absorbed in thought ; then kneeling, she offered up a silent prayer from her stricken heart that “ he who guideth the meek in judgment ” would choose her paths and direct her steps that all she did and all she said might show her to be the child of God, walking humbly before him. And he who heareth the feeblest cry of the least of his little ones, and “ pitieth them, even as a father pitieth his children,” lent a listening ear to her unbreathed petition, and the angel of the everlasting covenant came and ratified unto her “ that peace which passeth all understanding.” Rising from her knees she sung in a low, plaintive voice, those beautiful words of Edmeston :

“ Oh ! thou, whose mercy guides my way,
Though now it seem severe,
Forbid my unbelief to say,
“ ‘ There is no mercy here.’ ”

“ O may I, Lord, desire the pain
That comes in kindness down,
Far more than sweetest earthly gain,
Succeeded by a frown.

“ Then, though they bend my spirit low,
Love only shall I see ;
The gracious hand that strikes the blow
Was wounded once for me.”

Her soul was refreshed by communing with God ; the eye of faith could see, beyond the heaving billows of earth’s tumultuous ocean,

“ Sweet fields arrayed in living green,
And rivers of delight.”

CHAPTER IV.

THE SABBATH.

THE Sabbath dawned soft, and bright, and beautiful. It was one of those days when Nature seems to wear a holier, more heavenly look, as if to win, with her silent wooings, the heart of man away from the pursuit of earth's fleeting riches to a contemplation of those more enduring treasures above, which "eye hath never seen," but which if a man lay up, "neither moth nor rust can corrupt nor thieves break through nor steal."

As Grace threw open her shutters to admit the cool fresh air of the morning, a little bird, scared from its leafy hiding in the oak near by, flew in through the window, and in attempting to light on a vase of flowers, which stood on her work-table, upset it and dashed it to pieces. Despite her better judgment, which condemned the foolish superstition, her heart beat more rapidly, and she found herself asking the question "Of what coming evil can this be ominous?" She caught the frightened intruder and pressed it to her bosom, "Poor little bird, how scared you are; your heart beats as violently as my own," and she gently smoothed its glossy feathers from which the morning light glanced most brilliantly; and having reassured it to some extent, she placed it on her hand and approached the open window. For a moment

the little captive hesitated to go ; but the song of its mate reached its ear, and spreading its beautiful wings it flew to join her in her heaven-built home. She watched it as it darted to the oak from whence it came, and after its tiny form was hid among its rich foliage, she stood wondering if this could be the harbinger of future trouble. She had been told in her childhood that an occurrence of this kind portended death in the family, and though she had never known it to be verified, and regarded it as a saying of old women, she could not relieve herself of the feeling of mysterious dread that had seized her bosom. We all have our superstitions and vague fears connected with old omens ; and can we wonder that Grace, nervous as she was from the past week's excitement, and filled with well-grounded apprehensions for the future, should yield to a weakness which finds a home in every breast, which, if not an element of our nature, is at least a part of our education.

The call to breakfast roused her from her reverie. Passing into the hall she found the young ladies, as fresh and buoyant as a night of sweet sleep, and happy hearts could make them, waiting to accompany her to the breakfast-room.

"Good-morning," said they both, kissing her.

"Why, cousin, you look pale and agitated. What is the matter with you ; I hope you haven't one of your old nervous headaches ? See, Fannie, doesn't she look sick ?"

"My head aches slightly, but I think it will soon pass off. I will take a turn in the yard after breakfast, and see if the out-door influences of this lovely Sabbath morning will not drive it away."

At the foot of the stairway, just ready to ascend to

accompany her down, Grace met her husband, who, surprised, instantly observed her agitated appearance, and asked, "Are you not well this morning, Grace?" She replied as she had done to Annie, "that she had a slight headache." His anxious look, as it rested on her pale face, told that he was not satisfied with the cause assigned, but he forbore any further questioning.

Prayers immediately followed breakfast, after which, as Grace had proposed, they all took a walk in the yard. She found her headache gradually giving way under the genial influences of the balmy air and cheerful sunshine, and when Diamond, the little house-girl, came to tell them "that Missis said it was time to get ready for meetin'," the lily on her cheek had been supplanted by the rose, and the agitation had been succeeded by her usual gentle, yet happy composure. She had forgotten her fears; the burden was gone from her heart, and why should she not be well again?

How great is the power of our spiritual over our corporeal nature! Who can understand the subtle, mysterious influence? who can comprehend its workings? We see its effects in others; we feel them in our own being; yet the whole subject is to us a "hidden thing," whose depths we shall never pierce until this "mortal shall have put on immortality."

The bell tolling forth its summons from the hand-tipped spire of the neat brick church, called the people of God to come up from their homes to worship him in his earthly courts.

The church was crowded. Those acquainted with village life can readily conceive what induced many to come out on the present occasion.

The church stood on an eminence just without the village, and as Grace sat by the open window and looked on the landscape beyond, stretching away in varied beauty as far as eye could reach, her mind reverted to her dear old country church where, through all the Sabbaths of her past life, she had sat to listen to the words of heavenly wisdom, as they fell from the lips of the aged man of God.

It was the Sabbath of their monthly meeting, and she longed to steal into her old familiar seat beside the pulpit, to hear again the voice of her beloved pastor as in tones, tremulous with feeling, he spoke to dying men of the goodness and love of God in the gift of his only-begotten Son, that through his death and sufferings, they who were "dead in trespasses and sins" might be "quickened and made alive" by grace through faith in his blood. She recalled his earnest look, his beseeching accents, as he pointed out the way of salvation through a crucified Redeemer, and sought to "win souls to Christ," as well as to "warn them to flee from the wrath to come."

The text and words of his last sermon came vividly up to her mind: "God so loved the world that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." How he dwelt on the love of God, its freeness, its fullness, its height, its depth—that love which passeth knowledge—and endeavored by all the promises based on that immutable love to woo and win some straying one to the bosom of the great Shepherd. "Poor dying man," said he, while tears started from his eyes, and rolled down his furrowed cheeks, "won't you come to him who is able and willing to save you? Why do you stay

longer away ? You must come if you would escape the horrors of the second death ; there is no other way than this, and I entreat you in the name and by the authority of my Redeemer to come. Hear what he says : ‘ Whosoever cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out.’ But you must *come*. ‘ And the Spirit and the Bride say Come ; and let him that heareth say Come ; and let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the waters of life freely.’ ”

The picture was so life-like, so real, as it presented itself before her, that for the time she felt to be living over those hallowed scenes of the by-gone.

The minister rose to read the morning hymn. As his voice reached her ear she started from her reverie. She turned, and there met her eyes—not the old familiar faces that had smiled upon her through so many years—but those of strangers, whose look was one of cold indifference or prying-curiosity. She caught a glimpse of her husband’s countenance bent inquiringly upon her. Her heart quickened its beatings, and the rose-hue overspread her cheek instantly. “ Has he read my thoughts ? ” she asked herself ; “ surely he has, or why that anxious gaze ? ” She drove the sad, yet pleasing reflections from her mind, and made an effort to look cheerful. Gradually light chased away the darkness, and her face wore its usual calm, sweet expression.

“ A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another,” read the minister, in a clear, full voice, from the open Bible lying before him.

“ Most beautiful theme,” said Grace to herself, “ I wonder how he will treat it ? ” She dismissed all other thoughts and directed her attention to the discourse.

The preacher spoke first of the nature of love, its power, its depth, its duration, animating the heart through life, and ending only when that heart ceased its beatings ; then of the boundless, unchangeable love of God, as exhibited in our creation, preservation, redemption, and final justification. Secondly, of our duty to love God because of his exceeding love to us, manifested in all of his dealings with man from the time he breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and he became a living soul, through all succeeding ages down to the present time, and above all most clearly demonstrated in the gift of him who was made a propitiation for our sins, that we who had forfeited all claims to the divine favor through willful transgression, might be reconciled unto God through his blood, poured out freely for the cleansing of the nations ; of our obligation to love each other, since he who has wrought out for us a complete salvation has commanded us so to do. Toward the close of his discourse he dwelt on the necessity of cherishing liberal views toward those who differ from us in religious sentiment, and the great blessings and comforts resulting from the exercise of "that charity which thinketh no evil."

Grace was charmed with the sermon ; she felt her soul go out in Christian love toward him who had so clearly and so beautifully portrayed the teachings of divine truth. And her heart repeated the minister's closing words, "Behold how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity : it is as the dew of Hermon, and as the dew that descended upon the mountains of Zion ; for there the Lord commanded the blessing, even life for evermore."

“Very much pleased indeed ; delighted,” was her reply to old Mr. Holmes’s question relative to her opinion of the sermon ; “ he spoke like one whose heart was filled with the influence of the truths he taught.”

“Happy hit” thought the old man to himself ; “ I knew Brother Gordon would manage the matter well.”

But let us hear Grace’s opinion of the same discourse a few days later, as gathered from a letter written to her mother during the following week. Mr. Gordon, encouraged by old Mr. Holmes’s report of his success, called to see Grace in a day or two. From his conversation on this occasion, which was very free, she learned fully what he thought was liberality toward others who differ from us in religious views. We give the letter entire, as it speaks unreservedly in her own words her feelings in her new home.

MOUNT AIRY, May 9th, 185—.

MY DEAR MOTHER—

It is but a week to-day since I bade adieu to my loved home, with all its tender associations, and yet, I can not tell why—perhaps from the variety of incidents crowded into this short time, or it may be because I am so little accustomed to be away from you—it seems so long, that in thinking of it, I can scarcely realize that but seven suns have risen and set on its quiet shades since I last looked upon them.

Time with me flies not on rapid wing, and yet my heart has all it can ask save the presence of the far away loved ones.

My new home is a beautiful one with its handsome front and colonnade, its wide lawn ornamented with

shrub and bush and noble forest-trees, and pleasant too, with its airy rooms and cool walks and blooming flowers, while the society of my husband and of his kind friends, whose attentions are unremitting, would make me forget, if any thing could, my dear old home with its loving hearts. I have seen but little of the surrounding country yet, but Annie, who has taken several excursions on horseback, pronounces it "unsurpassed in beauty;" she describes the scenery as "varied and picturesque, the woods fit haunts for Dryads, the streams for Naiads." She is full of life and happiness; you know with what ease she could always adapt herself to circumstances, and in these few days she has learned to feel perfectly at home here, and I believe she has won the hearts of all she has met. Ever light-hearted and buoyant, she speeds along her way unmindful of care or sorrow. I often wish I possessed this happy faculty of hers: it is the source of so much gladness to all.

The tender affection and gentle manner of Mrs. Holmes have completely won my heart, while Fannie, the oldest daughter, who is to spend the summer at home, lavishes upon me all the love of a sister. Mr. Holmes's father, of whom you have often heard him speak, is very kind; but, as Mr. Holmes told us, very firm in his opinions, particularly his religious views, and seems almost distressed that I should be of a different persuasion from him. He frequently laughingly tells me that "he is going to make a Presbyterian of me," but I am not at all apprehensive that he will succeed.

Cousin Edwin, the young gentleman who accompanied Mr. Holmes when we were married, is the life and light of our coterie. He is a young man of great prom-

ise, a lawyer in Weston, respected and beloved by all who know him. So you see if pleasant society and kind attentions would make me forget those I have left behind me, you would all be in danger of having to apply to yourselves the old saying, "out of sight out of mind."

I heard Mr. Gordon, the village pastor, preach last Sabbath. His theme was one borrowed from those heavenly words of our blessed Saviour, "See that ye love one another." He portrayed the love of God, free, pure, without beginning and without end. Showed the obligations we are under to love him and one another, and the great need of the exercise of kind feeling and brotherly love toward those who regard the holy Scriptures as teaching a doctrine different from that we profess. I was delighted with the discourse, and felt that one who could speak thus of the privileges and blessings of charity, must possess what he so beautifully described. But in a subsequent conversation, I learned that he preaches to others what he does not practice himself. His remarks were particularly intended for those who do not think as he does. He believes himself right, and all other denominations more or less wrong; and that he expected the charity he so fully described, to be exercised by others towards him. How deplorable it is that any, and more particularly ministers of the gospel, should ever forget to "do unto others as they would have others do unto them." I wish Father Miller was here to answer some of his objections to Baptist peculiarities. I feel unable to defend our denomination against some of his accusations, especially when he dives into the

history of the church, and quotes from the "learned Fathers."

We had quite an animated discussion yesterday on close communion and immersion, in which he endeavored to show me that the first is essentially wrong, and the second entirely non-essential. I acted my part, as defender of our peculiar tenets, as well as I could, bringing forward the Scriptures to prove my assertions. He did not attempt to answer my reasons thus produced, but wandered off into such a maze of ecclesiastical proof, that my poor feeble efforts could not begin to keep pace with him. He *did not* answer me, I *could not* answer him, and so I yet remain unconvinced of my *error*, as he denominates strict communion. I think his endeavor is to prevail upon me to take the sacrament with my husband. To-morrow their quarterly meeting begins, and next Sabbath is their communion season.

He is to call this evening to resume the discussion of yesterday. Father has requested him to have another conversation with me on the subject, as he is exceedingly anxious that "I shall lay aside my prejudice and come to the Lord's table with my husband."

My warmest love to Pa and the dear children, and to Father Miller when you see him again, and tell him he must make it convenient to come and preach in Weston during the summer; I am the only Baptist in the place and in the whole county I believe, except Mr. Clarke's family, who have recently moved into the neighborhood. I must close, as I wish to think over the subject of this evening's discussion, in order to be prepared for Mr. Gordon's attack.

Pray for me, dear mother, that I may be led in the way

of truth and righteousness. And now farewell. May God our Father keep you and all of the dear ones at home from all harm, is the earnest prayer of your devoted daughter,

GRACE TRUMAN HOLMES.

CHAPTER V.

THE MINISTER'S VISIT.—THE STRUGGLE.

GRACE had passed most of the day alone in her room. Her husband had been called away in the morning to attend to some business for his father, which would require his absence till evening. Mrs. Holmes had been engaged in preparation for the meeting, for her house was always the home of the visiting ministers, and of those members of the church who lived too far in the country to return after dinner to afternoon services.

The young ladies had gone to spend the day with Mr. Clarke's family, who, a few months before, had moved from the neighborhood of Annie's father to a farm about four miles from Westón. Mr. Lewis had accompanied them. To the astonishment of all, and perhaps to the wonder of himself (if he had not looked into his own heart for the reason), he had become, in the last week, the accomplished and untiring gallant of the young ladies. He, *perhaps*, deemed it his duty to attend to Miss Annie, as she was a visitor in his uncle's house; but there had been other young ladies visiting there, to whom he had given scarcely the coldest civilities of etiquette. *Perhaps* he thought his health demanded recreation from study; but how could he, when neither ache nor pain visited his manly form, nor the slightest

shade of languidness ever threw itself across his path to bid him seek the sunshine? *Perhaps*—but we will not surmise. What reason have we to suppose that our student had thrown aside the dusty leather tomes of the law school for the vellum and gilt of Cupid's softer teachings? But certain it is that no knight of the olden time, impelled by love and honor, and lured on by the promise of ultimate success, ever acquitted himself more nobly than did our hero, just released from the bondage of codes and canons. For evening walk or morning ride, he was ever ready; and Fannie often laughingly told him, "she scarcely knew her cousin Ed., now that he had so completely stepped out of his former quiet self, into the dashing young gentleman."

About three o'clock in the evening, Grace, as she sat at her open window, looking out upon the village below, saw Mr. Gordon approaching the house with slow step, as if his mind was busy with thoughts which must not be disturbed by the too active motion of the body. She had been watching for him with a feverish anxiety for the last hour. She had read, she had thought; but all her endeavors to collect and arrange her ideas proved futile. The more she essayed to be calm, and set in order those arguments she had so often heard fall from the lips of Father Miller with such convincing earnestness and power, the more discomposed she became, the less tangible every thing appeared. They were, to her mind, like the mirage of the desert to the eye of the weary traveler, fair and enticing, full of beauty and proportion, yet ever eluding the grasp; sought, and ever sought, yet never possessed. She wondered why this was so. She had often felt, that to establish her position

from the holy Scriptures, would be to her an easy task ; but now she found that those passages which were most familiar to her, and which she had always regarded as containing incontrovertible proof of the point in debate, were with difficulty recalled, and, when read, seemed to lose half their former power.

She saw the minister turn aside from the path, and seat himself beneath a large oak, which screened him from the observation of those who might be in the front of the house. Opening the book he carried under his arm, he rested it upon his knee, and carefully turning over the leaves, noted a few places. He then read two or three pages, and remained some minutes absorbed in thought. She knew the subject which was occupying his mind so intensely, and the object of all this care ; and as the victim before the unsheathed blade, she felt that a moment more, and the cold steel must enter her bosom.

She leaned her head upon her hand, and endeavored to suppress her rising emotion. She called to mind the promises of him who has said, "I will be with you always." She thought of her parents—of their unflinching confidence and unwavering faith—of old Father Miller—his holy teachings and parting injunctions—and she wondered if this could be the temptation of which he spoke. Then her present situation came up before her in colors of such glowing intensity, that reason turned aside, while feeling asserted with redoubled power her right to reign. She was the inmate of a father's house, who differed from her entirely in religious views, and not being able to see as she did, must, of course, regard her firmness as obstinacy. And her husband, of

whose heart she knew she was the idol, regarded the method of taking the solemn vow of baptism as altogether irrelevant to the nature of the vow itself. And must this ever separate them? Ever rear itself, an insuperable barrier, between their Christian communion? Then she called to mind that pleading, earnest look of her mother, which always rested upon her, when the subject was mentioned in her presence, with an eloquence in its meaning far more potent than words could have made it. All this caused her to feel that perhaps she was doing wrong in attempting to fortify herself in a position which she must ever be defending, because she would ever be attacked.

"I may be mistaken after all," she said to herself, as she closed the Bible lying on the window. "I will, at least, listen calmly to his arguments, and not suffer my views and old attachments so to blind my judgment, as to prevent me from seeing the force of his reasoning."

"Mr. Gordon wishes to see you, Miss Grace," said the servant, gently opening the door.

"I will be down in a few minutes," she answered, as tremblingly she laid aside the work, which had fallen from her hand, and going to the bureau, took up the brush to smooth her hair. She caught a glimpse of her face in the mirror, and started as its expression of restless care met her eye. "I must not enter Mr. Gordon's presence wearing this anxious look," she whispered to herself. "He will read in it the conflict of thought that has swept through my bosom. He will feel that I am ready to yield without argument, and will give himself no trouble to convince me of my error. I would not have him think that I had been guided by mere prejudice,

and not by reason. I believe I am right, yes, I know that I am, but I must hear his arguments. It will be hard for him to prove to me that his position is correct, and I will never be willing to set aside the rules of my church until it is made clear to my mind that my ground is untenable. But I must overcome my agitation, that I may listen to him with composure. I shall never be able to understand what he says, if I do not quiet this heaving breast. I will hear him through, and then decide upon my future course."

She went to the window and looked carelessly forth. She did not think, she *felt*—felt that her swelling heart *must* be tranquillized. She said to the surging sea, "be still," but the billowy waves went leaping on, unheeding her human voice, and gathering renewed energy from the very attempt to subdue them.

Thus it is with creature effort! Thus it is when we look not to the hill whence our help cometh. We put forth our strength in our own name, but to defeat the end of our earnest desires. Let us, then, ever be mindful of him to whom all power is given, and in whom dwells the fullness of all excellency.

"I must be calm! Assist me, O, my God, thou in whom I trust. Let that voice that awed to rest the angry Gennesaret, now speak peace to my troubled bosom. Thy aid I implore! on thee I rely; O, let not my strength and stay fail me in this my hour of need:

" 'Cover my defenseless head with the shadow of thy wing.' "

She paused a moment, and assuring herself by a glance at the mirror that all traces of her deep emotion had vanished, she descended to the parlor, and met the

minister with an air of calm dignity, which made him feel that she was well fortified in her tower of strength. He did not read the doubt and fear which were even then struggling in her bosom for the mastery over faith and hope.

She took a seat on the sofa by Mrs. Holmes, and looked imploringly into her face, to see if she could find therein any evidences of the conversation between her and Mr. Gordon. But it wore that same full look of silent love which had won the heart of Grace when first they had met. Gathering courage from its beautiful composure, she breathed more freely.

"Will Brother Holmes return to tea?" asked the minister, resuming the conversation interrupted by the entrance of Grace. "I am expecting Brother Robinson this evening to assist me in our meeting, and I have taken the liberty to invite him to meet me here."

"You did right, Brother Gordon; my house is ever a home for the servants of my Master, whatever may be their station in life. Feed the hungry, clothe the naked, and administer to the wants of the suffering, is his command, and I desire that it may be my meat and drink to do his will."

How like her own dear mother sounded these words to Grace; and as the sweet voice of the speaker fell upon her ear, the words sank deep into her heart and left an impression there in favor of Christian communion, which all the arguments she had heard from the minister had failed to produce. How often is it that kindness subdues where reason dare not tread.

Mr. Gordon was puzzled to know how to broach the subject of his visit. The very fact of his having made

an appointment served to embarrass him, for he was well aware that Grace and Mrs. Holmes were every moment expecting him to introduce it. Grace was anxious that he should begin. Reality, however distressing, is preferable to torturing suspense. And she wished to hear all that could be said in favor of a step, which she felt would remove from her pathway obstacles, which, unless that step should be taken, must ever exist to mar her happiness, and which might finally end in the estrangement of her husband's feelings.

The minister made some passing remarks ; asked for the health of the young ladies, and, with evident uneasiness in his manner and countenance, walked toward the window. He cast a searching glance down the avenue, but it met not the object of his inquiry. Folding his hands behind him, he paced the floor with nervous tread.

"Annie charged father, before she left this morning, to bring her a letter from the office, and I suppose he is waiting for the mail," remarked Grace to Mrs. Holmes, as Mr. Gordon, for the third or fourth time, paused before the window and looked earnestly out.

"Yes, I judge so. I have been expecting him back for the last half hour. The mail has been detained, I suppose. Do you know, Brother Gordon, if it had reached the village before you left ?"

"The mail-boy was just coming in as I passed up the street, and the mail has had full time to be opened. And here," said he, as he turned toward the door at the sound of a footstep in the hall, "is Brother Holmes with some of its contents."

"Glad to see you," said Mr. Holmes, walking up to

Mr. Gordon, and cordially grasping his hand. "Have you been here long? I expected to get back sooner, but was kept waiting for the mail. Here is a letter for Annie, Grace," said he, approaching her and throwing a nicely enveloped missive into her lap. "Well, have you converted Grace from the error of her way, or, anyhow, made her willing to commune with us next Sunday. I have told her, to the best of my ability, why she ought to join us at least that far, but I have not been able to make her believe what I have said. It does seem to me that these Baptists are the hardest people to make believe they are wrong I ever saw. What is that old song about people's thinking they are right in spite of you? Did you ever hear it, Grace?"

"Do you mean,

" 'Convince a man against his will,
He's of the same opinion still?'"

"Yes, yes, that's it; and I do think it must have been written about some Baptist, it suits them so well. You may talk to most of them until you are gray, and you can't make any thing out of them but dippers and close communionists. I do hope Grace will not prove so hard-headed. I should hate to see her refuse the communion just after her husband has taken it. It wouldn't do. And the fact of the business is, I don't believe she will when she has heard all of your strong arguments."

At the conclusion of this animated speech, which old Mr. Holmes had made standing, with his hat on, Grace sought the eye of her mother. It was bent upon her with that same pleading look, and she felt, while beholding that face so full of earnest affection and sympa-

thy, that if there were aught of prejudice, aught of error in her mind, she would tear it out and cast it from her, cost what it might of pain and suffering. For her sake she would hear, with earnest desire for right, what could be said in favor of the course they were urging her to adopt.

"I have brought with me," said the minister, seating himself by Grace, "the works of one of the first men your denomination has ever had, Robert Hall of England ; perhaps you know something of him, Mrs. Holmes."

"I have heard Father Miller say he was truly a great and good man, but that he thought he had fallen into a gross mistake when he permitted his churches to commune with other denominations. I have not read any of his writings."

"Is he that good Baptist brother who says all Christians that are church members ought to commune together?"

"Yes, he has said, 'that all Christians are entitled to the eucharist, and that sincere and conscientious Pedo-baptists have a right to all church privileges, and as communion is one of these privileges, every member has a right to partake of the Lord's Supper.'"

"What do you say to that, Grace ? ain't that clear?"

She hesitated a moment as if to assure herself that she was right, and then answered,

"That certainly seems to be good reasoning ; but father, you do not permit your infant members to commune."

"Tut, tut, child, they ain't members."

"But they are baptized ; and do you not consider all baptized persons members of the church ?"

"Pshaw ! you are wandering from the subject : we are talking about communion now."

"But I have always believed no one ought to commune that has not first been baptized, and that all who have complied with this command not only have a right to follow the other but that it becomes their imperative duty to do it."

"Let me read to you, Mrs. Holmes, what Mr. Hall says on that subject. It is just in point, and so convincing that I think no one can controvert it. 'It is not sufficient to allege the prescribed order of the institutions ; it is necessary also to evince such a dependence of one upon the other, that a neglect of the first, from involuntary mistake, annuls the obligation of the second. Let this dependence be once clearly pointed out, and we give up the cause. It has been asserted, indeed, with much confidence, that we have the same authority for confining our communion to baptized persons, as the ancient Jews for admitting none but such as had been circumcised to the passover. But it will at once be seen that the two cases are not similar, for in the former there is an express prohibition : no uncircumcised person shall eat thereof. But it is nowhere asserted in the New Testament that no unbaptized person shall partake of the eucharist.'"

Grace felt that this argument was unanswerable. "Surely," she said to herself, "Father Miller never read that. How clear it is."

"And furthermore, Mr. Hall says, 'that the *natural* order of the Christian sacraments, which we all admit, may be set aside under certain circumstances.' You see,

Brother Holmes, that as they are both positive ordinances, there is not a necessary *connection* between the two. They were instituted at different times, under different circumstances and for different purposes. Baptism is the act of the individual whereby he shows his faith in the blessed Trinity ; communion the act of a society to commemorate the dying love of the Redeemer."

"Yes, yes, I see it all ; great pity that more of the Baptists don't feel like Mr. Hall. Somehow or another they have got blinded and you can't remove the scales from their eyes. You may talk to them about their bigotry and selfishness in not letting us take the communion with them, and they'll tell you about baptism being a *pre-requisite*, and that we do not invite those we consider unbaptized to *our* table, as if we ever thought it belonged to *us*. They know very well we call it the Lord's table, and *all* are asked to come who love him. But Mr. Hall understands what we mean ; he knows all about it, and I wish every Baptist would read that, Brother Gordon, then we wouldn't hear so much about *pre-requisites*. The fact of the business is, I believe all are invited to come who love Christ. But read on."

"Again, Mr. Hall in still stronger terms says, that 'strict communion sets the conduct and feelings at variance, and erects into a duty the mortification of our best and holiest propensities.' And here, on page 107, he remarks, 'that can not be scriptural which is totally opposed to the *genius of the gospel*. The genius of the gospel, let it be remembered, is not ceremonial but spiritual ; consisting not in meats, or drink, or outward observances, but in the cultivation of such interior

graces as compose the essence of virtue, perfect the character and purify the heart. These form the soul of religion. When, therefore, the obligation of humility and love come into competition with a punctual observance of external rites, the genius of religion will easily determine to which we should incline.' "*

"That, I think, expresses the sentiment of our Saviour when he said to his disciples, 'These things I command you, that ye love one another,' " remarked Mrs. Holmes, interrupting Mr. Gordon.

"What do you say to that, my daughter? I don't think your Father Miller could get over that. I do wish he was here to hear Brother Gordon read from one of his own men, and that, too, the smartest one they ever had that I know any thing about. The fact of the business is, the more people know the more liberal they get to be in their notions."

Grace thought her father's reasoning altogether irrelevant to the subject, and the imputation of ignorance fell as heavily upon her as upon any other member of the "selfish sect," but these thoughts did not frame themselves into words. She twirled Annie's letter with an agitation of manner that betrayed the disquietude of her mind, and which, the minister observing, asked her what she thought of Mr. Hall's arguments.

"They are very weighty, Mr. Gordon; and I do not see how they can be answered. The subject never before presented itself to my mind as it does now; but is there nothing in the Bible which throws light on this momentous matter? nothing upon which we can rest and feel ourselves secure? In all you have read, Mr.

* Robert Hall's complete works, American edition, p. 107.

Hall has given no authority from that book, which in all things should be our guide and instructor."

"Hear him speaking in the language of the great apostle to the Romans. After remarking upon the differences of opinion existing among Christians, he says, 'We are expressly commanded in the Scriptures to tolerate in the church those diversities of opinion which are not inconsistent with salvation. We learn from the New Testament that a diversity of views subsisted in the times of the apostles betwixt the Jewish and Gentile converts. Some declined the use of certain kinds of meat, forbidden by Moses, which others partook of without scruple ; one man esteemed one day above another, conscientiously observing the principal solemnities ; another, esteemed every day alike. Instead of endeavoring to silence these differences by interposing his authority, St. Paul enjoins mutual toleration. Him that is weak in the faith receive ye, but not to doubtful disputations. For one believeth he may eat all things ; another, who is weak, eateth herbs. Let not him that eateth despise him that eateth not ; and let not him that eateth not judge him that eateth ; for God hath received him. Who art thou that judgest another man's servant ? unto his own master he standeth or falleth. Yea, he shall be holden up ; for God is able to make him stand. One man esteemeth one day above another ; another man esteemeth every day alike. Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind. (Rom., xiv. 1-5.) To the same purpose are the following injunctions in the next chapter : We, then, that are strong, ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves. Now the God of peace and consolation grant you to be

like-minded, one toward another, according to Jesus Christ, that ye may, with one mind, and with one mouth, glorify God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Wherefore, receive ye one another, as Christ also received us, to the glory of God. (Rom., xv. 1-7.) In order to determine how far these apostolic injunctions oblige us to tolerate the supposed error of our Pedo-baptist brethren, we have merely to consider whether it necessarily excludes them from being of the number of those whom Christ has received to the glory of the Father ; whether it be possible to hold it with Christian sincerity, and finally, whether its abettors will stand or fall in the final judgment. If these questions are answered in the way which Christian candor irresistibly suggests, and which judgment approves, they conclude in favor of the admission of Pedo-baptists to communion, not less forcibly than if they had been mentioned by name ; and all attempts to evade them must prove futile and abortive*.

“And further on, we find the following emphatic language : ‘It were well if the evil,’ mark, he calls the effects of this practice an evil, ‘resulting from the practice of strict communion, were confined to its effects on other denominations. But, generally speaking, the adoption of a narrow and contracted theory—’”

“It is that very thing, Brother Gordon, that very thing, that I object to. It is a narrow, contracted business to think nobody can understand the Bible but you. I am certain of one thing : the Baptists, with all their reading and knowledge, know very little about the golden rule. They wouldn’t let us baptize our own

* Robert Hall’s complete works, American edition, page 68.

children if they could help it ; but I've interrupted you, read on."

" ' Generally speaking, the adoption of a narrow and contracted theory will issue in a narrow and contracted mind. Conceiving themselves to be a highly privileged class, they are almost inevitably exposed to think more highly of themselves than they ought to.' "

" Just so ; they think nobody is right but them ; all of their actions say, ' Stand aside, for I am holier than thou.' Grace, my daughter, you will no longer defend a people who are called narrow-minded and narrow-hearted by their own leaders, will you ? Come out from among them and stand on the side of truth and charity. The fact of the business is, I could not bear for my daughter to belong to such a church, so ignorant and so bigoted ; but, wife, what is your opinion about this matter ? You haven't said a single word on the subject."

" I have always been persuaded in my own mind, that our Baptist friends lay too much stress on non-essentials, and I cordially endorse Mr. Hall's liberal views respecting this institution, so well calculated to unite by one common tie all the children of our common Father. ' Love one another, as I have also loved you.' "

Grace felt the force of this generous sentiment thrill her very soul. How beautiful, how divine that love, which can embrace in its wide-spread arms, all the followers of the Redeemer. " One faith, one Lord."

" So I feel," said Mr. Gordon, closing the book which he had held open during the conversation. There was one more argument he had intended to present for

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Grace's consideration ; but, feeling that her judgment was sufficiently undecided, he knew that an appeal to her heart would accomplish more now, than all the reasoning he could offer. Turning to her, he said in a tone of deep earnestness, which reached her heart, and made her for the time forget the want of liberality he had expressed in the conversation the previous evening, " Why should there be a separation between the children of the same heavenly Father ? We are taught by our blessed Saviour, who instituted this ordinance for his people that they might show forth their love to him and each other, ' to love one another, even as he has loved us ;' and we should not suffer matters of but little moment—mere differences of opinion—to interpose between the heirs of salvation, and cause them to wrangle and dispute among themselves, when they should be united, as one man, to fight against the common enemy, the hosts of Satan, which at every point attack the encampment of the saints. We should strive for union here below, as we hope to enjoy it above. The saints will all commune together in heaven, and ought to do so on earth. How glorious would it be if we could all see, eye to eye ; could think, and feel, and act together as brethren ; and how guarded should we be against all such teachings as are calculated to sow dissensions among the members of the household of faith, and bring discord into the bosom of families whose hearts are knit in the strongest bands of hope and love. Why should we debar from the sacramental feast those whom we so dearly love, and who we believe are journeying with us towards that blissful state of existence, where—robbed of all prejudice and error, all earthly stain washed out by the blood of

the atonement—we shall know even as we are known, and shall together partake of the glory and happiness purchased for us by the sufferings of our ascended Lord. The wife, then, shall commune with her husband, the child with its parent ; all shall drink of the new wine of the kingdom, and together sing the new song, even praise to him who hath redeemed us, and made us sons of God, and joint heirs with our Lord Jesus Christ. I hope, Mrs. Holmes, that you will consider these things well, and that, in deciding on your future course, you may be guided by the influences of the Holy Spirit. He, alone, can lead you in the paths of truth and righteousness.”

A tear trembled in the eye of Grace as the minister closed. An appeal had been made to her heart, and her tender, affectionate nature, responded to that appeal from its depths. She could not controvert the arguments to which she had listened ; she could not say “*nay*” to her husband, whom she loved with all the strength and constancy of her yearning, trusting soul, and in whose piety she had unshaken confidence. Could she ever be separated from him in this, one of the highest and holiest enjoyments vouchsafed to us by him who spilt his blood freely that we might be purified from all uncleanness. How could she stand aside as having no part nor lot in the matter, when he had said, “Come eat ye, all, of it !”

The contest was fierce ; the struggle against old associations and deep founded feelings intense ; and fervently she sent up a silent prayer that he, “whose word giveth light,” would shine upon her darkness, and impart to her grace to follow whithersoever he directed. “Not my will, O God, but thine be done.”

The minister and her father saw the effect of the last words, and were satisfied. The woman's heart had been touched, and feeling triumphed. The point had been gained—the desired impression made; and, as if by mutual consent, the conversation turned upon other topics.

In a short time the young ladies returned, full of animation, from their exhilarating ride. Mr. Lewis, or “cousin Edwin,” as he was called by all the younger members of the family, walked slowly to the house as if pondering in his mind some weighty subject.

“Why, cousin, what is the matter with you?” said Annie, as she tossed her bonnet on the sofa, and took the seat by Grace, which the minister had just vacated. “Look, Fannie, how agitated Grace is; and see, there is one of those meaning tears. The little fugitive has early been called from its hiding-place, despite the heart-felt wish of Cousin John. I am glad he is not here to see it. But, come, shake hands with grief, and call up your sweetest smile, for he will soon be here! We passed him in the village, and he said he would follow us in a few minutes. But, do tell me, what has saddened you? What have you done to my cousin, Mr. Holmes, to cause her to feel so badly?”

“Oh, nothing, nothing,” answered old Mr. Holmes; “she is just crying a little for joy to think she can now come to the communion-table with John. I told him Brother Gordon could set matters straight. I knew his arguments would convince her. I am glad, my daughter, that you did not hold out against the truth. It's no use fighting with old rusty swords.”

Grace made no reply, but, handing the letter to Annie, rose to leave the room.

"Stop, cousin, and hear the news from home," said Annie to her, as she was approaching the door. "Just listen, will you? Mother writes that Tom will be here to-morrow, and that I must come home on Monday. Just think of it, so soon! Well, I will be very sorry to leave your pleasant society, but I must obey my mother, and tear myself away."

Any one who had closely observed Mr. Lewis's countenance, might have seen a shade of regret pass over his handsome face. Mrs. Holmes noticed it, and in it read a prophecy of the future.

In a few minutes Mr. Robinson and young Mr. Holmes arrived. He was greeted with kindly warmth by each member of the household.

"We are glad, indeed, to see you once more in our village," said Mr. Lewis, shaking him cordially by the hand. "It has been a long while since you were to see us."

Mr. Robinson was generally known and much beloved in Weston. He had once had charge of the church for two years, and since that time he had regularly paid them a yearly visit. His exemplary walk had won the respect of the whole community; and his gentle, affectionate manner, had gained the hearts of all his people. No one could look upon that calm brow, and watch the heavenly expression of that beaming eye, without a feeling of admiration and regard. Grace found herself hanging on his words, as he told of a joyous meeting he had just closed with his own church. Even Annie's gaiety subsided to a gentle quietness, as she heard him speak, in language of deep thankfulness, of the goodness of God to rebellious man.

The evening passed in religious conversation, in which

the aged minister led. He always made it a rule, wherever he went, to speak of holy things, and to ascertain the spiritual condition of each one of the household ; and he had always found this one of the most successful means of extending his Master's kingdom.

The husband was aware of the object of Mr. Gordon's visit, and regretted that he was, necessarily, prevented from hearing the arguments in favor of mixed communion. Arguments he knew there were, but as he had been thrown but little with the "tight-laced sect," he had never had much need to inform himself with regard to them. He marked the look of deep thoughtfulness on the face of his young wife, but could not read its meaning. He knew not whether it expressed indecision or regret.

"And what did Mr. Gordon say?" he asked of her, in a half playful manner, after they had reached their room at night.

• For a moment she hesitated to reply. She scarcely knew how to clothe her thoughts in words. "I can not tell you all he said, nor give you the sum of his arguments ; but he has made me feel that I have been too strongly attached to my old opinions, and that Christian fellowship demands that I should set aside every hindrance that in any way interposes itself, and unite with God's people in showing forth his love and sufferings. It is a hard thing to yield an opinion when it has been so long and so strongly cherished ; but I would not, *must not*, sacrifice the right to any sentiment, however dear. Pray for me, my husband, that I may have strength to perform my duty in this matter, and that we, together, may be useful in the cause of our Lord

and Master. I feel that I need his direction to enable me to choose the path of duty, and his guidance to give me strength to walk therein. Will you not ask that they may be given me?"

"Let us pray," said Grace, seeing that her husband hesitated; and, kneeling beside him, she offered up, in a voice broken with emotion, an earnest, pleading prayer to God, for grace and strength to do his will. "Leave me not, nor forsake me, O thou who art the help of thy people in all generations. Cleanse me from sin, search my heart, and purify it from every stain, that I may walk in the way of thine own appointments, and be ever ready to follow whithersoever thou goest. And grant, my Father, that we may be thy children, through faith, walking in thy commands and ordinances blameless. May we, together, pass through life supported by thine almighty arm. Be thou our shield and hiding-place, and let us be thy faithful children. Guide us through life, and receive us in death; we ask, for the dear Redeemer's sake. Amen."

Her husband imprinted a kiss upon her lips as they rose. Her words had sunk deep into his soul, and he determined to live nearer to God than he had done, and with his blessing to be to her faithful and affectionate, ever seeking her happiness before his own.

Grace retired to rest with less anxiety upon her mind than she had felt since Mr. Holmes had first spoken of her sectarian views to Mr. Gordon, on the porch, the evening of her arrival. Her opinions were changed, her mind fixed; and she looked forward to the coming Sabbath with a degree of composure she had never before experienced in the contemplation of this subject.

CHAPTER VI.

THE COMMUNION SEASON.

ANNIE busied herself throughout the morning of Saturday with preparations for her return home.

Grace accompanied Mr. and Mrs. Holmes to church. Her views of the previous evening had become more and more decided by a conversation with her mother, during the walk to church, and by some remarks of Mr. Gordon, made at the close of the sermon. She not only felt submissive to the act she was about to perform, but a degree of pleasure in the reflection, that now there remained no point of difference between her and her husband. Mrs. Holmes had dwelt with particular earnestness upon this subject; and the great gratification manifested by her every tone and look, had imparted a joy to the heart of Grace which she had not deemed it possible for her to experience in the performance of a deed which she had hitherto regarded essentially wrong.

Mr. Lewis called in the evening to see Annie. She, in her own frank way, expressed her regret at having so soon to leave Weston.

"I shall not be here to see Lydia Clarke, when she calls next week, Mr. Lewis. I hope you will explain to her why I left so suddenly, and enjoin the fulfilment of

the promise she has made, to visit me, with Fannie, during the early fall. She was an old schoolmate of mine; indeed, I have known her from her childhood, and I do not believe there is a nobler creature living; so warm-hearted, so generous, so free."

"You speak in terms of high praise of your friend, Miss Gray."

"Yes, and I regard her as highly as I speak. You promised to accompany the girls you know; and let me have no reason to suspect that you lightly set aside your engagements," said she, laughingly, at the same time tossing him a rich Luxemburg, which she had been twisling on her fingers during the conversation.

"Most assuredly I will give you no cause of complaint on that score, Miss Annie. I shall regard my word inviolable; and will be ready to do the young ladies' bidding at any time. I will take great pleasure in acting as their protector to—"

"Forest Glen, Mr. Lewis; have you so soon forgotten the name of our rural home?"

Annie did not observe that, while Mr. Lewis was making this gallant reply, he was also carefully depositing the Luxemburg in his hat, which, through mistake or indifference, he had introduced into the parlor and deposited on the sofa, instead of leaving it on the rack in the hall.

"You must certainly be a man of short memory, Mr. Lewis, whatever other virtues you may possess."

"That, of course, you will deem my misfortune, and not my fault, Miss Annie; but why your remark?"

"Why, 'twas but last evening, as we rode by that beautiful cottage-house on the way, protected by its

bastion of old oaks, and resting so peacefully in its quiet loveliness that I pointed out its resemblance to my own home, and asked you if you did not think 'Forest Glen' a very apropos name for such a place?"

"You will pardon my seeming indifference (his voice assumed a slightly graver tone), when I tell you my mind, just then, was busy with other thoughts. I was looking far into the coming years, and wondering what should be my reading of the great book of life; whether its pages shall be fair and its words hopeful, or whether the rude hand of disappointment will blot and blur its characters, and its lessons be lessons of sorrow and despair."

Annie turned upon him a mingled look of surprise and admiration. She essayed to read in the expression of his face the solution of these strange words. His eye was bent upon her with deep earnestness. She blushed as its intense gaze met hers, but assuming an air of *badinage*, she said:

"Why, Mr. Lewis, if looking into my future cast such a gloom over my present, I would always blindfold myself whenever I had to turn that way. I would rather incur the risk of the dread omen of looking over the left shoulder than to be ever facing seeming evil."

"You would but use a subterfuge, Miss Annie, and one that must utterly fail you in the end. Sorrow and disappointment are in the way of us all. We may leap over them in the outset of life, but by so doing we merely exhaust our strength, and when the battle is to be fought, which must sooner or later occur, we find ourselves unequal to the contest—without valor and without armor."

"Won't argue the question with you, Mr. Lewis ; I remember some of my past defeats. Before I again come in contact with such a mental Ney, I will endeavor to wake up my valor and rub up my armor. You are always so unexpected in your metaphysical attacks ; showing fight when one is least looking for it. My philosophy is set forth in those lines of Barry Cornwall,

" ' Life let us cherish while yet the taper glows.' "

"You surely do not mean to say that you are always glad and gay. This would argue a want of feeling and reflection, which I am convinced does not characterize you. You certainly have your seasons of sorrow ; you are something more or less than woman, else."

She turned upon him a look of anxious inquiry. What could he mean by those grave questions and that graver tone ?

"Well ! yes, I am sometimes sad ; I sometimes feel that the best, most earnest desires of my soul, are not to be met here—that there must be something in the far-off future which will answer all hope, all expectation. But I will not give myself unhappiness because I do not possess it now, but will patiently await its coming."

"And what do you call this out-looking, out-reaching of the soul after future good ? and what do you think can satisfy it ? and when will the time come when we can say to the present, 'it is sufficient ; I ask nothing more ?' "

She hesitated a moment, and then, with her eyes bent full upon him, she, with her wonted frankness, replied :

"I do not know, Mr. Lewis, that I can clearly answer all your questions. I believe God has implanted those desires in our bosom, and for a wise purpose. He does not intend that we shall be fully happy here, lest we forget, while in the midst of enjoyment, to lay up for ourselves treasures above ; and it is not until we shall enter upon the possession of those treasures, that we will feel to have nothing more to desire—nothing more to hope for. This is my philosophy on that subject ; and I think disappointments are given us that we may the more readily and the more earnestly perform this work."

Mr. Lewis regarded her with blended interest and surprise. He had not expected an answer so replete with Christian philosophy, from the gay and apparently thoughtless girl. That she felt, that she sometimes reflected, he did not doubt ; but he had not supposed that feeling and thought could be embodied by her into language expressive of the only true solution of these weighty problems. He found that she had not only paused in her merry trippings along her way of blooming flowers to notice that here and there one had drooped and perished from its stem, but that she had also gathered up these frail mementoes, whose fragrance, while it spoke of the past, shed also a holy perfume over the future.

"And so you are going to leave us, Annie," said old Mr. Holmes, as he unceremoniously entered the parlor and approached the sofa where she and Mr. Lewis were sitting. "Fannie has just told me you are all ready to go, and that your brother will be here this evening for you. It is too bad, ain't it, Edwin, for her to be hurried away from us, after this fashion ? She ought to

stay several weeks longer and get acquainted with our people, especially our village beaux ; we have some mighty fine young men in Weston, real clever fellows, good chances for any body ; and may be, if you'd stay a little longer, you might catch one of them ; and we'd be very glad for you to come down and settle with us, Annie."

"O, I am delighted with Weston, Mr. Holmes, and have no doubt that your young men are all you have described them to be. I am acquainted with some of them, you know ; and judging from these illustrations of your subject," said she, at the same time looking archly at Mr. Lewis, who was standing in an attitude of gentlemanly nonchalance before her, "I would have no hesitancy in pronouncing you a man of exceeding fine judgment on such points ; but you would not have me act the disobedient girl, would you ? You would not advise me to remain, when duty calls me home ?"

"No, no ; as your mother has sent for you, you had better go ; daughters must always mind their mothers. The fact of the business is, girls that don't make good daughters, don't make good wives ; they are always so self-willed, and determined to go their own way. Edwin, my advice to you is, never to marry a woman that don't mind what her mother tells her ; they won't do at all."

"I'll regard your counsel, uncle, for your example in this matter is quite as convincing as your precepts."

"Yes, my boy, if you ever get such a woman as your aunt Jane, you may consider yourself a lucky fellow ; don't you say so, Annie ?"

"I most assuredly agree with you, Mr. Holmes ; Mrs

Holmes is 'confirmation strong' of your good judgment and most excellent fortune."

"Fortune, child ! it was no fortune ; just good common sense. A man ought never to marry until he gets suited."

"I don't believe a man ever does until he believes, or fancies himself suited."

"Well, I reckon not ; but some of them get most mightily mistaken, sometimes. Annie, you'll come to see us again, soon ? I am going to send Edwin and Fannie up to bring you down, before long."

"I shall be most happy to avail myself of an early opportunity to come and see you. My stay has been so pleasant that, notwithstanding duty demands it, I must say I leave Weston with regret. I shall miss Cousin Grace so much when I get home ; and Lydia Clarke, too, is gone ; O, my, how lonely I will be ! but I will not think of it now. I will not let the trouble of the future cast its gloom over the pathway of the present. You may think what you please of my reasoning, Mr. Lewis, but I assure you I am too much of a philosopher for that."

"Tut, tut ; put down your hat and stay to supper, Edwin ; you must not think of leaving before bedtime. This is Annie's last evening with us, and John will soon be back ; take a seat and stay till he comes. I do wish he could get that business settled, it's so troublesome !" he added, in an undertone, as if speaking to himself.

"No, I thank you, uncle ; you and Miss Annie must excuse me. I have some matters at the office that require my attention, and I must make amends for my

negligence through the past week, by increased diligence this evening." He bowed politely, and left.

A very different conversation was going on in another room. "All that's very true, Miss Gracey ; but don't you think the blessed Saviour knowed what was right for us poor creeturs to do ? We ought to be mighty keerful to do jis what he tells us in sich things, an' no more. When we do what he says, we are sure we do right, an' when we do more we may do wrong. We ought to be mighty perticklar."

"Are you giving Cousin Grace good advice, Aunt Peggy ?" asked Annie, as she entered the room. "Grace, is Aunt Peggy adding her might of argument to Mr. Gordon's irresistible appeal ? Well, certainly you will have to yield, beset as you are, on every side."

"Aunt Peggy is warning me to act cautiously, and to feel fully assured that I am doing for the best."

"No, Miss Annie, I aint able to advise Miss Gracey ; I was jes tellin' her my notions about baptism an' communion. You must know, Miss Annie, I b'leeves in 'mersion an' close communion ; so I does, bless de Lord."

"You a Baptist, Aunt Peggy ?—it can't be ! One of Mr. Holmes's servants a Baptist !"

"Yes, Miss Annie, I'se bin a Baptist nigh on forty years, an' I'se Baptist still, bless de Lord."

"How do you hold out so faithful, Aunt Peggy, here in this Presbyterian family, and no church to go to ?"

"The grace of God keeps me, Miss Annie, bless de Lord. It's bin a long time since I was at one of my own meetins ; never sence the last time I went with Miss Jane, back to old Massa Staunton's. I goes to

hear Massa Gordon sometimes, an' likes him very well, too ; but I can't be nothing but Baptist, Miss Annie, bless de Lord."

"Do you never commune with the Presbyterians, Aunt Peggy ?"

"No, no, Miss Annie ; I can't do it. I sometimes feels mighty bad when I see Miss Jane, that I nursed when she was a baby, and who was brought up Baptist, take the bread and wine, and thinks I can't do so, too, with her ; but when it comes to me I shakes my head an' lets it pass on. If any thing could make me take it, it's seeing Miss Jane do so, for I b'leaves she's a Christian woman, an' a good one, too, bless de Lord."

"Was Mrs. Holmes raised a Baptist, Aunt Peggy ?"

"Yes, indeed, Miss Annie ; old Massa Staunton was the strictest kind of Baptist ; almost what's called 'old iron-siders ;' never took sacrament with any but his own people in all his life ; and mity seldom went to hear any body but his own preachers."

"You are not as particular as that, Aunt Peggy ?"

"No, Miss Annie, I goes to hear the gospel preached wherever I can. I likes our Presbyterian brethren very well : an' thinks they are a mighty good people, but does wrong in sprinkling babies, an' grown up folks when they wants to jine the church."

"Did you ever see any babies sprinkled, Aunt Peggy ?"

"Me, child ! why, bless your soul, didn't I hold young Massa John in my arms, an' that dear little creetur yonder, too," pointing to Fannie who sat a silent listener to the conversation, "when old Mr. Robertson dropped a little water on their faces. I did n't

b'leeve it was right, but Miss Jane asked me to do it, as I nursed the dear little things an' they war so fond of me, an' I couldn't refuse. I got to thinking 'bout it one day, after Miss Fannie was sprinkled, an' I thought 'twas wrong in me to do it ; so when it come little Freddy's turn, I asked Miss Jane please to excuse me, for I b'leeved I was out of my duty ; and so sence then Maria has held the children."

"Aunt Peggy, you do not think it is wrong to commune with *Christians*, do you ? Christ has not commanded us *not* to do so, and should not we do whatever we can to promote peace and unity among his followers ? You know he has expressly told us 'to love one another.' "

"Yes, Miss Gracey, I know he has ; and all this talk 'bout Christian fellowship, an' loving one 'nother, seems mighty purty, an' is mighty well in its place ; but he has told us to love him, too ; an' did n't he say, 'ye are my disciples if ye keep my commandments ?' an' has n't he told us to be *baptized*, an' *then* to do this in 'membrance of him ?' We ought to love our brethren bery much, Miss Gracey, but our Saviour more, bless de Lord."

"That is very true, Aunt Peggy ; but when our Saviour does not expressly forbid our communing with those who entertain a different belief on some subjects from ourselves, and in emphatic terms has enjoined upon us to love one another, and not to fall out by the way, I think it is our duty to do all we can to preserve harmony among his children, even though it should require a sacrifice of opinion on our part."

"I can not feel, Miss Gracey, that we poor mortals

has any right to set aside the commands of the Saviour, who died for us. We ought to do jes as he tells us, even if it is hard ; we should not go by our feelings when it is opposed to his blessed word."

But, Aunt Peggy, think of the evils resulting from close communion ; it separates husband from wife, parent from child, and master from servant ; and yet all profess to be traveling toward the heavenly city, where we shall all commune together throughout endless ages ; and if we can live there and commune together forever, ought we not to do it for a few years here on earth ? Would you not be a great deal happier if you could come with your mistress around the table, and with her partake of the emblems of his body broken, and his blood, shed as much for you as for her ? It now appears to me this is the most objectionable feature of our Baptist communion ; it separates members of the same household, and debars them from partaking together of the blessed privileges secured to Christians by the death of Christ. As Mr. Hall has so truly said, 'it is opposed to the genius of the gospel.' "

The old negro's face was lit up with a triumphant smile. With unwonted energy of voice she replied :

"I knows nothin' 'bout the genus of the gospel ; I never heerd tell of it, Miss Gracey or any of Mr. Hall's lurned words ; but dis I know, Miss Gracey, dat what de Master has told his servants to do, dey ought to do : and he makes it all so plain in his book dat every body may understand it, whether dey got genus or not. Look here, Miss Gracey, let me explain it to you ; if the Master sets a table in his own house, and says, every body dat wants to eat of dat table must come through

de door, could you think any body ought to come to de table who has got through de winder, or come down de chimbley? Do you think he could set at dat thar table to eat of the master's provisions, Miss Gracey?"

"Certainly not, Aunt Peggy; if the Master says you *must* come through the door, it would look like contempt of him if, when the door is left open, a man should creep in at the windōw."

"It is jes so, Miss Gracey; de Master tells us we *mus* come in at de door; and dem who haint bin baptized, dey come in at de winder or down de chimbley; dey aint come in at de door, where dey was told, bless de Lord."

"But they don't think so, Aunt Peggy; they think they have been baptized just as much as you believe that you have. It is only a difference of opinion, and they are as much entitled to their opinion as we are to ours."

"Do you consider that they has bin baptized, Miss Gracey?"

"No, Aunt Peggy, I do not; but I leave that matter with them."

"Well, well, Miss Gracey, you must do jes as you please; but I ruther think if Massa John was not Presbyterian you would not be open communionist. I must leave you now and go and tend to my chickens; it's time dey was put in their coops. We will talk about dis matter some other time."

"Aunt Peggy argues well, Grace; I do believe she could refute Mr. Gordon himself if he would candidly answer her plain questions."

"So she does, Annie; but she can not see the subject

in all its latitude ; her reasoning is such as is in common use with those Baptists who have not studied the matter thoroughly. I did not know until yesterday that so much could be said on the opposite side. I think Mr. Hall is very conclusive in his reasoning."

"Sister Grace, you do not believe in infant baptism, do you ?" said Fannie, emerging from her seat near the window. "It always seemed to me to be entirely useless, and I have felt that the Bible does not authorize the practice. I was sprinkled when I was a baby, as Aunt Peggy told you, but I do not think it was right."

"No, I do not believe in sprinkling of any kind ; nothing but immersion is baptism to me."

"I am very glad, cousin, that you are entirely convinced of the justness and propriety of the step you are about to enter upon. But what will your mother and father think of your change ? It will be a great trial to them to know that you have overstepped the teachings of that church which they think was founded by Christ and his apostles ? And what will dear old Father Miller say to it ? Poor old man, he will be so grieved to know you have separated from the faith. You remember his last injunction ; he seemed to fear it then ; really it is too bad, Grace ! I know you are doing what you suppose best ; but let me ask you, is not your heart more convinced than your head ? Would Mr. Gordon's arguments and Mr. Holmes's persuasions have had such power to change your views if you had not been married ?"

"I am convinced that I am acting for the best, Annie, and I think so will my father and mother be when I have told them all. My objections are removed ; my

duty appears clear to me, and why should I hesitate to perform it? I love my husband, have every confidence in his piety, and nothing but an imperative sense of right could keep me from participating in all of his church ordinances. When I married him, I felt I could not do this. I knew we differed in our religious sentiments, and I feared the results of this difference. Now that the obstacle is done away with, I shall be more than happy to partake with him of the privileges of a child of God. He has never urged a consideration of this matter upon me, but has left me to my own convictions; but I am assured that he is deeply gratified that my views are not as rigid as they were, and that now we can together come to the communion of the Lord."

"Well, cousin, I am glad your mind is entirely convinced, and that you are confident your course is the correct one," answered Annie, in a tone of earnest calmness, only used by her when speaking of the most serious matters. "It will be of no use for Father Miller to come to preach for you; Mr. Gordon will answer. I shall leave you on Monday to bear back to your friends intelligence they will least expect to hear—that you have become a Presbyterian."

"O, no, Annie, I have not become a Presbyterian; I shall only commune with them; I am not going to join their church; do you suppose I will ever change my views respecting baptism?"

"Can't tell, cousin, what this step may lead to; you remember that quotation from Pope, 'Vice is a monster, etc.'"

"Fie, fie, Annie, you do not call my contemplated act a vice, do you?"

"By no means, cousin, though I can not endorse it. I merely quoted the line to show you the progressive nature of wrong."

"There's a young gentleman in the parlor wishes to see Miss Annie," said a little servant girl, appearing at the door of Grace's room, quite excited with her haste to communicate the intelligence of the stranger's arrival.

"Did he come in a buggy, Diamond?"

"Yes, marm, and his hoss is purty tired, I tell you, Miss Annie."

"Tom, I'll wager," said Annie, and without stopping to cast a look in the mirror, she bounded down stairs and into the parlor; in a moment more her arms were round Tom's neck in a very sisterly manner, and she had given him a half dozen hearty kisses. She asked him questions about home and home affairs in such rapid succession, that she scarcely gave him time to answer intelligibly. Having assured herself of the continued prosperity of all she had loved and known in the vicinity of "Forest Glen," she hastened to bring down Grace and Fannie.

The evening passed happily by. Old Mr. Holmes manifested his delight in every word and look. John had returned with the pleasing intelligence that the business which had *seriously* threatened to involve him in continual litigation, was at last fully settled. And that which had been the very pith and marrow of his hopes was at last accomplished: Grace was turned from the error of her way; she had consented to come out from the midst of that "ignorant, bigoted sect," and commune with her husband. What could he ask more

to complete his joy? "The fact of the business is," said he, at the tea-table, laying down his knife and fork, and looking round on the company with a pleased expression, "this is one of the happiest evenings of my life ; I feel almost young again, and would look so too, if it was not for my gray hairs. We have a heap to be thankful for in this world, Brother Robinson," he added, addressing the minister, who sat on his right.

Young Mr. Holmes, or "John," as Grace affectionately called him, and as he was generally known throughout the village, partly to distinguish him from his father, and partly because every body liked the kind-hearted, agreeable son of the Elder, testified his deep gratification at the present aspect of family affairs by his pleasant smiles and kind words. His was a quiet joy, the more fully felt and appreciated by the observer, because of its very unobtrusiveness. His mother, who read every emotion of his heart, saw, with inexpressible satisfaction, the wellings of the deep fountain of peace within his bosom. No one had felt more sorely than she had done the progress of the struggle in Grace's mind, and no one enjoyed more fully its triumphant termination ; but her life was one of calm uniformity ; she suffered with Christian fortitude, she rejoiced with Christian gratitude.

The young people were not at all restrained by the presence of Mr. Robinson. The children of the family, from John down to little Neddy, had been dandled on his knee, and had listened to his words of heavenly wisdom ; and Annie, who saw, or fancied she saw, a resemblance in him to Father Miller, cast aside that diffidence which characterized her when in the presence

of strangers greatly superior to her in age, and conversed as freely with him as she would have done with her dear old pastor ; and he was attracted by the candor of her words, and the geniality of her disposition. Her joyous laugh made rich music to his ear, and went away down into his heart, touching chords which vibrated thrillingly with loved memories. And though his eye had grown dim with looking at the scenes of time, and his ear deaf listening to its sounds, yet he loved to watch the boundings of youth, the ebbs and flows of the warm current of life as it gave vigor to the manly form, or imparted grace and beauty to the lovely maiden ; he loved, too, to catch the notes of glad joy as they escaped from the heart of sportive innocence in merry laugh or airy song. This evening he was particularly cheerful. No one listened with more enjoyment to the songs of Grace and the girls, assisted in the bass by Tom, than did he, as he reposed in the old arm-chair.

The evening passed most pleasantly to all, and each regretted the termination of their enjoyment by the announcement of nine o'clock, the hour for retiring, with Mr. Holmes in the summer season. As was his custom, ever since he had dedicated Fannie to God, he this evening laid his hand on her head, as she bade him good night, and blessed her.

The morning dawned :—as sweet a Sabbath day as ever cast a smile of glorious loveliness over the awakening earth ; and the children of God made ready to go up to his house to worship him in his sanctuary.

But little had been said to Grace about communion since the evening of the pastor's visit. The conversation of old Aunt Peggy, and the few warning words of

Annie were all she had heard on the subject. It was understood by all the household that her objections were entirely removed, and that she, with the other members of the family, would gather round the table, and together celebrate the sufferings of a crucified Saviour. Nothing had been said to Mr. Robinson of the change in her views, as it had taken place before he arrived. And Mrs. Holmes deemed it best, now that Grace had decided to lay aside every hindrance, and commune with her husband, to let the subject remain at rest, believing that nothing would be gained by further agitating it.

Mr. Lewis called to accompany Annie to church. Mr. Gray escorted Fannie. Mrs. Holmes, Mr. Robinson, and the children walked together, sometimes joined by John, who felt altogether superseded by his father, who would walk with Grace. This he did as a testimonial of his approbation of her determination, and of the deep gratification he enjoyed. If he felt and looked gay the evening before, he appeared much younger this morning, as dressed in his very best suit of cloth, with neck-tie of clerical whiteness, and Beau Brummel adjustment, he stepped with alacrity to the side of Grace and offered his escort. His countenance wore a perpetual smile, and his manner toward every one was the very perfection of suavity. The servants noticed it, the passers-by on the street observed it, and the young gentlemen at the church door, remarked, as he handed Grace up the steps—"Well, old Mr. Holmes must be delighted with his new daughter ; see how well pleased he looks."

As Grace entered the church, she saw the table with its covering of virgin whiteness, and her heart beat more

rapidly, and the tell-tale flush on her cheek revealed to her husband, who seated himself by her, her intense emotion. Why was she affected thus ? She wondered at her own discomposure. She had always before regarded the spread table with feelings of tranquil gratitude and love.

The minister read a hymn and all the congregation joined in singing. There was no organ, no choir ; all sung with the spirit, making melody with their hearts, and with their voices praising God.

The song ended, and the minister rose and announced his text : " And they continued steadfastly in the apostle's doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayer." (Acts, ii. 42.)

The attention of Grace was arrested by the text. She anxiously hoped the minister would say something about communion which would strengthen her in her purpose, and throw light upon a subject which, notwithstanding Mr. Hall's opinions and her own determination, did not yet stand forth to her mind in noon-day clearness.

He announced his theme, " Christian communion." In plain, forcible language, he proceeded to give an exposition of the apostle's doctrine of redemption through the blood of our Lord Jesus Christ ; justification by faith ; sanctification through the influences of the Holy Spirit ; and finally, blessedness at God's right hand. He then spoke of the practices of the first disciples, and contrasted their teachings and customs with the usages of the Roman Catholic and Episcopal churches of the present day, showing that these churches have widely departed from the design of the ordinance of commu-

nion as instituted by Christ, by administering it in one element, and giving it to the sick and dying. "It was the breaking of bread, not the reception of the consecrated wafer from the hands of priest or bishop. It was established by our Saviour in the midst of his disciples, and not alone with Peter, or Thomas, or John. 'And as they were eating, Jesus took bread and blessed it, and broke it, and gave it to the disciples and said, Take, eat; this is my body. And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it; for this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.' (Matt., xxvi. 26, 28). It is a church ordinance; no mention is made of its being observed except when the disciples were gathered together, and no man has a right to send it out of the church; to administer it to any other than a church member. There is no warrant in the gospel, either by example or intimation, for such a practice, and he who engages in it transcends the plain rules laid down in the holy Scriptures for our guidance. There is no instance on record within the lids of God's word where it was given to the sick or dying; and attaching to it undue importance, as some have done, making the recipient of it also to receive a gift, denominated sacramental grace, has exalted it in the stead of that regenerating power of the Holy Spirit, without the influence of which, on his own heart, no man can enter the spiritual kingdom of God, though he should be baptized an hundred times, and though he should gather round the table through a long life-time. This perversion of this holy ordinance by sinful man, has led to untold evil, and no doubt has

proved the savor of death unto death to many, who have been induced by false teachers to trust to it to cleanse them from sin, and gain them admittance to the joy which Christ has in reserve for his people. It is obvious from every mention made of it in the Bible, that it was partaken of by those who *believed* in Christ—had renounced the world to follow him ; and that, when assembled together—not individually alone, but when met together ;,not on a dying bed or in a sick chamber, but when able to come around the table of the Lord. ‘ And as they did eat, Jesus took bread, and blessed and brake it, and gave to *them*, and said, Take, eat ; this is my body. And he took the cup, and when he had given thanks, he gave it to *them*, and they *all* drank of it.’ (Mark, xiv. 22, 23.) So also in Luke, xxii. 19, it is said—‘ And he took bread and gave thanks, and brake it, and gave unto *them*, saying, This is my body which is given for you ; this do in remembrance of me,’ etc., etc. The words of my text,” said the preacher, “ teach the same thing. ‘ Then they—*i.e.* those who had been baptized—continued steadfastly in the apostle’s doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread.’ In the forty-sixth verse of this same chapter, we read, ‘ And *they* continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart.’ In the seventh verse of the twentieth chapter of the Acts, it is said, ‘ Upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread,’ etc. From these, and other portions of Scripture equally explicit, we learn that whenever the disciples communed they met together, ‘ continued in fellowship and breaking of bread.’ A man

may pervert the meaning of God's word to answer selfish ends, or may overreach its positive injunctions to accommodate his doctrines to the views of carnal men ; but we should ever go to the law and the testimony, and if it condemn us and our practice, let them fall. The Scriptures are our only infallible guide ; where they lead let us follow with zeal and confidence, but let us not, my brethren, ever dare to add to, or take from God's holy word, lest, like Nadab and Abihu, we, by our disobedience, call down the wrath of an avenging God, and, like them, perish by fire from heaven.

" Having established," continued Mr. Robinson, " that communion is an ordinance belonging to the church, to be partaken of only by members of the church, let us ask what this communion is, and what is necessary for us to do to entitle us to a participation of it ?"

Here Grace bent forward to catch every word as it fell from the lips of the speaker. Would he overthrow all of Mr. Hall's reasoning, by making baptism necessarily precede communion ? Would he take from her this main stay of her present belief ? Surely not. With Mr. Hall he would argue, " that although there is a *natural order* in which these ordinances are observed, yet, as there is no *natural connection* between them, they may, under certain circumstances, be inverted."* Her face grew flushed, and her pulse leaped violently as she felt that the only hope on which she rested *might be removed*. She looked at her husband, but it was evident he did not feel as she did, for his face wore an expression of undisturbed serenity. Either he had not heard Mr.

* Robert Hall's complete works, page 292.

Robinson's second proposition, or he rested secure in the belief that whatever he might say, he would certainly prove that all who are Christians have a right to Christian communion.

In turning to look again at the preacher, she caught the eye of old Mr. Holmes. A smile played across his features as his eye met hers: he was congratulating himself on the lucidness with which Mr. Robinson had shown up the fallacy of the Roman Catholic and Episcopal churches, in giving the elements to those who were not members of Christ's visible church. He observed the flushed cheek of Grace, but attributed it to pleasurable excitement, arising from being strengthened in her good opinions of Presbyterian practice.

If Mr. Robinson had but stopped there, the veil of doubt would have remained. Her own hand was too feeble to remove it; others, if competent to the task, would have suffered the darkness to rest upon her mind. The true point of difference was not essential, then why again open the breach? But Mr. Robinson did not stop here. He thought not of Baptists or disaffected Presbyterians. His desire was to declare the whole oracle of God. Mr. Gordon, who was watching the effect of the sermon upon Grace, moved uneasily in his seat as he heard the second division of the discourse, and saw the changed expression of her countenance. He feared that all was lost, for he knew the light in which Grace held immersion,—the only mode of baptism; but it was too late, and he composed himself, hoping that Mr. Robinson would touch lightly on baptism, and dwell more at large on the temper of the mind necessary for communion and in accordance with the genius

of the gospel, which requires that "we shall be all things to all men, that thereby we may save some."

"It was the Master's table, set in his own house." Of this, Grace was fully satisfied. "It belonged to none but those whom he invited to partake, and who had complied with the terms of admission." And now what were these terms? The timely illustration of Aunt Peggy came up to her mind. And what, thought she, if there is but one door, and *these* have come in at the windows. She was almost bewildered as the light came breaking in upon her mind; and she almost started from her seat as the rush of contending emotions swept through her bosom. She made an effort to calm herself. "Let me hear him to the end," said she, "and then if I can not commune, I can not—and must bear the consequences."

"Communion," the minister proceeded to remark, "in modern phraseology, is employed by common consent to express that fellowship which experimental Christians have with the Saviour of sinners, and with one another in the ordinance of the Lord's supper; and we seem to be justified in this use of the phrase by the language of the apostle in 1 Cor., x. 16, 17: 'The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ? For we being many, are one bread and one body; for we are all partakers of that one bread.' And how should our hearts ascend in thankfulness to God as we contemplate the great love he bore toward us in giving his own Son to die, that we, through his blood, might be reconciled to him; and how should our stubborn wills

be subdued as we gaze on these emblems of the broken body and shed blood of him who left heaven and condescended to become of mean estate, that we, through his poverty, might become rich. How blessed the privilege to be permitted to show forth his death till he come. All are asked to come who love the Lord, who are willing to take up their cross and follow him. Hear the words of heavenly love, uttered by the Lord himself, 'Come, eat ye all of it.' What condescending love, what expansive benevolence, high as the heavens, deep as the deepest depths, embracing all who will comply with his requisitions. And here I would ask what are these requisitions ?

"Let me answer in the words of the apostle, 'Believe and be baptized.' These are the terms, and the *only* terms. Without *baptism* there is *no* admission to the communion ; he who would partake of the one ordinance must have submitted to the other. *This* alone can introduce us within the pale of Christ's visible kingdom ; without it, we must ever remain debarred from the 'breaking of bread.' A man, however true his piety, however exemplary his walk, however bright his hopes of eternal life, *can never*, according to the terms of the gospel, break bread in remembrance of Christ's death, until he has submitted to the ordinance from which he arises to walk with him in a newness of life. 'We can never commune with those who are not baptized, and who, of course, are not church members, even if we regard them as Christians. For baptism is the initiating ordinance which introduces us into the visible church ; and where there is no baptism, there, of course, is no visible church. Should a pious Quaker so far depart

from his principles as to wish to commune with me at the Lord's table, while yet he should refuse to be baptized, I could not receive him ; because there is such a relationship established between the two ordinances that I have no right to separate them ; in other words, I have no right to send the sacred elements out of the church.* This is the teaching of the holy Scriptures, and of all the wise and good men of all sects, from the time of the apostles down to the present day. Christ commanded his disciples to 'Go teach all nations, *baptizing* them,' etc. After they were baptized they were then to teach them all things which he had commanded. One of the commands to be taught the baptized disciples was, 'Do this in remembrance of me.' In accordance with this, when Ananias became satisfied of Saul's conversion, he said to him, 'Arise and be baptized.' And in the verse that precedes my text it reads, 'Then they that gladly received his word were baptized, and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls.' When those of Samaria, to whom Philip preached, believed, 'they were baptized, both men and women.' (Acts, viii. 12.) Philip said to the eunuch, 'If thou believest with all thy heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. And he commanded the chariot to stand still ; and they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch, and he baptized him.' (Acts, viii. 37, 38.) Here we see that the first thing that followed a profession of belief in the Lord Jesus Christ was baptism.

* Letter on Communion, by Rev. E. D. Griffin, D. D., President of Williams's College. If any one doubts that this is the doctrine of the Presbyterian church, let him read that letter.

“But hear further : in Acts, xvi. 31–33, we have an account of the conversion of the jailor and his household. Paul and Silas preached unto them faith in the Lord Jesus, and they believed, ‘and he was baptized, he and all his, straightway.’ ‘Can any man forbid water,’ said Peter, ‘that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we ? And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord.’ (Acts, x. 47, 48.) Submission to baptism was the very first act to which both Jews and Gentiles were called after they believed. In accordance with this, our church teaches, ‘Baptism is the act whereby the parties baptized are solemnly admitted unto the visible church.’* ‘For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free.’ (1 Cor., xii. 13.) ‘Baptism, is a sign of profession and mark of difference, whereby Christians are distinguished from others that are not baptized.’†

“And here is the authority of Dr. Wall, that great and good man, whose piety and talents entitle him to be heard with deep consideration ; who, acquainted as he was with the manners and customs of the churches of his time, and of all preceding ages, was altogether qualified to speak upon this subject with certainty and authority. These are his words : ‘*No church* ever gave the communion to any person before they were baptized. *Among all the absurdities that ever were held*, none ever maintained *that* any person should partake of the communion before he was baptized.’‡ The law of Christ

* Confession of Faith, pages 144, 336.

† Methodist Discipline, page 15.

‡ History of Infant Baptism, Part II., Chap. 9.

requires that *all* who believe the gospel should be baptized. For any to abstain from baptism when he knows it is an institution of Christ, and that it is the will of Christ that he should subject himself to it, is such an act of disobedience to his authority as *is inconsistent with true faith*. How excellent soever any man's character may be, he must be baptized before he can be looked upon as completely a member of the church of Christ.* The order in which these two positive institutions of our Saviour should be administered is clearly set forth in the New Testament, and is supported by the practice of all churches in all ages. Even those who pervert the plain rules of Scripture by arrogating to themselves the authority to send the elements out of the church, have never dared to administer them before the subject had been baptized. Would it not, my brethren, think you, have been highly offensive to God, if the priests or the people of old, had arrogated to themselves the right to invert the order established by him for the administration of his own appointments? For instance, admitting first to the passover, and afterward performing the rite of circumcision; burning incense in the holy place; then offering the propitiatory sacrifice. Would they not have called down condign punishment upon themselves, and, like Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, been driven from the earth? And is God less jealous of his honor to-day than he was then? Does not the Most High regard with equal care the purity of his worship in all generations? He is a jealous God; let us not provoke him to wrath by doing despite to his

* Dr. Doddridge's Lectures, pages 508, 512. Discourses on Regeneration, postscript to preface, pages 12, 13.

solemn ordinances, lest he prove to us a consuming fire. Let us be very careful to walk in his footsteps, doing whatsoever he has commanded us, and we have this for our consolation : ‘ He will be with us always, even unto the end.’ And now, in conclusion, I would exhort all who feel that they have passed from death unto life, and have followed Christ in baptism, to examine themselves and so to eat of that bread and drink of that cup, thereby showing forth his death, till he come. Let each man be fully persuaded in his own mind.”

The preacher came down from the pulpit, followed by Mr. Gordon. The pastor had kept his eye steadily fixed on Grace throughout the latter division of the sermon. She had several times noticed his scrutiny, and endeavored to hide her emotion, but the effort was a fruitless one. It seemed to her that he was reading the inmost thoughts of her soul—the fearful struggle that was going on in her bosom between love and principle.

The morning dawn had reached the noontide brightness. How could she resist conviction under language so clear, so pointed, supported as it was by the word of God, the practice of all churches and in all ages, the opinions of the wise and good in every generation, and the usage of that very church with which she had consented to commune? She had believed that the established order of the ordinances was not “*absolutely essential* ;” that “*in some cases, under some circumstances,*” in obedience to the “*genius of the gospel,*” and to promote peace and fellowship among brethren, that Christians should commune together whether baptized or not, this being left entirely to their own conscience ;

but now she saw that in thus deciding she had fallen into a gross error ; that there was not only no warrant in the Bible for such a conclusion, but that all its examples and precepts were in direct contradiction to such principles. But how could she refuse when she had given her promise to commune ; when all were expecting it, her husband, her mother, her father ? “ Could it be wrong, under such circumstance ? ” she asked herself, “ for her to commune this one time, and then set her face as a flint against all innovations of the customs of that church which she believed was built after the pattern given by Christ to his apostles.

“ How can I decide this momentous question ? ” She leaned her head on her hand and offered up a silent prayer for the guidance of her Father’s hand, the support of his mighty arm. Her whole body was convulsed with emotion. “ The waters have come unto my soul, O God ; I am come into deep waters where the floods overwhelm me ; deliver me out of the mire, and let me not sink ; let me be delivered out of the deep waters ; make haste, O God, to help me, for in thee do I trust.” And in answer there stole in upon her soul the words of the blessed Saviour, “ Ye are my friends if ye do whatsoever I command you.”

The struggle was past, love had yielded to principle. She decided to act out her convictions, trusting to God to enable her to bear the reproach and scorn which she knew she must meet. The storm was over ; and she found relief in silent tears.

The minister read a hymn, and, as is usual, requested all the communicants to take the center seats. Mrs. Holmes leaned forward and whispered to Grace to come ;

she made no reply, but shook her head. Her mother saw her tears and divined their cause, but she could not now demand an explanation ; and casting a look of regret upon her, she moved to a middle seat just opposite where Grace sat. Mr. Holmes, in his great desire to open a way for his wife and Grace to pass out, had left the pew without observing that Grace made no movement toward rising. When he stepped out into the aisle, he turned round and saw her still seated. He beckoned to his son to come and bring her with him. But the husband had seen the conflict his wife had undergone, and her determined refusal of his mother's solicitation ; so he motioned to his father and remained still. The old gentleman could not comprehend the meaning of such conduct ; he thought that timidity in Grace had prevented her coming out decidedly, so he determined to have the elements handed her where she sat. He cast anxious looks at her as the service proceeded, but her head still rested on her hand. "What is the matter with Grace?" he asked of his wife. She nodded her head and remained silent. Annie, who was sitting behind Grace, bent over and softly whispered in her ear, "Do what you think is right, cousin."

The deacon passed up the aisle to the communicants in the last pew. As he was returning, Mr. Holmes touched him and whispered in his ear. He stopped and handed the bread to John, who, taking a piece, passed it to Grace ; but she again shook her head, and murmured "I can not," while the tears started afresh.

Mr. Holmes had watched with deep intensity the result of this last effort. When he saw the decided manner of Grace's last refusal, he bit his lip and moved

uneasily in his seat. He could not tell what had made her do so ; and his impatience became so great he could scarcely wait until church was dismissed to ask the cause. As soon as Mr. Gordon had pronounced the amen, he found his way to her side, and taking her by the arm in no very gentle manner, asked her half aloud, why she had acted so ?

"I will tell you all when I get home," she said, in a firm tone, choking down her emotion. And taking her husband's arm, they left the church. As Mr. Holmes passed out, he stopped for a moment to have a word with Mr. Gordon. "You must come up and see her forthwith. If she is not brought in to measures now, we had just as well give her up. The fact of the business is, I don't know what made her do so. But bigotry is bigotry always."

The minister could have answered him readily, but Mr. Robinson was near and he forbore. "I will come up to-morrow," said he. "She will then be more composed and better calculated to listen to reason. Do not let Brother Robinson leave before I get there. It will require all his logic in addition to mine to remove her present objections."

"Be sure to come," said the old gentlemen, as he turned to seek his wife and Mr. Robinson. He found that they had just gone out, and bidding a hasty "good evening" to the pastor, he left to follow them.

The parties walked home in silence. Each mind was busy with its own thoughts. It was a subject which no one wished to mention to the other. Mrs. Holmes felt that it was not a suitable time to enter into a full explanation to Mr. Robinson, and that, too, when she

knew that his remarks had changed the whole tide of her daughter's thoughts and feelings. She intended, after dinner, to speak to him, and request him to converse with her, and, if possible, so to explain the subject of free communion, as to win her back to their opinions.

Annie alone ventured to remark to Mr. Lewis "that she was glad to see Grace had courage enough to do what she believed right."

"And did she really intend to commune to day?"

"She did. Mr. Gordon's conversation with her a few evenings ago, caused her to feel that she could do so without violating her own conscience. She knew it would be a deep gratification to Cousin John, and at the earnest persuasions of her father, and the eloquent, though silent appeals of Mrs. Holmes, she had made up her mind to do so. But Mr. Robinson proved so clearly that no one has a right to the communion who has not been baptized, and she is so strong an immersionist; I know that she saw fully she would be doing wrong to keep her word to them. It was a dreadful conflict to her. Did you not observe how very agitated she was?"

"I remarked her restlessness during services, and saw traces of tears upon her cheeks as she arose to leave the church, but I supposed the occasion and sermon had caused them. Mr. Robinson's remarks were very clear to-day."

"Perfectly convincing. How any one who believes alone in immersion could commune with another who is sprinkled, after such reasoning and proof as he gave us, I can not tell."

"I agree with him that baptism must always go before communion, but you do not pretend to argue, Miss Annie, that immersion is the only mode?"

"I do not profess to be able to argue the point, Mr. Lewis; but I certainly believe in *one* baptism, and only *one* mode. I think the Bible is as clear as noon-day on that point, and all the sprinklers in the world could not convince me to the contrary."

"You certainly do not imply that you would not listen to reason, Miss Gray?"

"No, no; but they have not reason enough to prove it to my mind. I once heard a Presbyterian argue with Father Miller, and although he was a much more learned man, and made quotations from Greek and Latin, yet he could not refute him; for Father Miller brought up the evidence of some of the strongest and wisest Pede-baptists in support of his position. I know Mr. Gordon will have a conversation with cousin on baptism, for that now is the point of difference between them; but I'll wager he will not make her a sprinkler as readily as he did an open communionist. She is pretty sound on that point."

As Annie finished the last words they reached the hall door; and as she heard the footsteps of her Cousin John descending the stairway to meet Mr. Lewis, the conversation was discontinued.

Grace, after reaching home, explained to her husband why she had refused the bread. She told him, after Mr. Robinson's convincing proof, that communion belonged to the church, was a church ordinance, and that no one had a right to partake of it who was not a church member, and that baptism was the only door into the

church, she felt that she would be sinning against God to violate her conscience in participating with those whom she *never* could regard as baptized believers. "Did I not do right, my husband, in thus dealing faithfully with myself? As much happiness as it would have given me to have communed with you, I dared not do what I knew, *felt*, would be wrong."

He clasped her in his arms as he gazed on her face, radiant with an expression of heroic faith and trust in principles of eternal truth, and kissing her fondly, replied, "Yes, you did right, my dear Grace, you acted nobly; and you have not only my approbation of your conduct, but my earnest admiration of your true heroism. It gives me far more happiness to see you adhere to and practice what you believe, than it would were you to commune with me a hundred times in violation of your firm convictions. 'Be firm,' as Father Miller said, 'and do not yield to temptation.' My father and Mr. Gordon must leave you in quiet possession of your own views, and not endeavor to force you to act upon their faith."

"But I must explain to father why I did so; he will believe me guilty of falsehood if I do not."

"I am willing you should do this, but I can not consent that they should annoy you with arguments to prove the validity of sprinkling."

"Oh, that they could never do; my views are so firm with regard to that, they can never be changed. But I will listen to any proof they may adduce. This, I think, is my duty."

Grace had become sufficiently composed during this conversation to make her appearance at the dinner

table ; and as she took her seat on the left of Mr. Holmes, by her husband, all evidences of excitement had passed away. Her manner was subdued. Her feelings had been deeply wounded by Mr. Holmes's conduct toward her at the church, but she remembered it was her husband's father, and she determined to drive all thoughts of injury far from her mind.

Mr. Holmes carved the ham, and helped the guests in a very hurried manner. It was plain to all that something of importance was working in his thoughts. Mrs. Holmes preserved her usual equanimity, and endeavored, by introducing ordinary topics of conversation, to divert her husband's mind from his unhappy reflections. Annie and Mr. Lewis joined in conversation with Fannie and Mr. Gray, who sat opposite to them. Mr. Robinson attended to and answered Mr. Holmes's observations. Every thing was passing agreeably when old Mr. Holmes, no longer able to control himself, laid down his knife and fork, and looking hard at Grace, said, "I do not know what can make people act so ; Grace, why didn't you commune to-day ? You promised to do it, and I expected you would."

Her husband's face flushed instantly—but it was his father, and he stifled his indignation. Grace, meeting his gaze with a calm, confident look, replied, "I could not, without violating what I regard the teachings of God's holy word."

The color came and went as she pronounced the words, but her voice was firm, and her manner composed. Annie gave her a smile of encouragement, but she needed it not. She had acted conscientiously in the fear of God, and with her feet resting on the stronghold

of honest conviction and holy determination, she felt to defy all reproach and contumely. Mr. Robinson looked at Mr. Holmes with an air of surprise and inquiry. He was astonished at the tone of his voice in addressing his daughter, and also at the nature of the question. Mr. Holmes, observing it, answered, "My daughter, Brother Robinson, is a Baptist ; but Brother Gordon so far convinced her of the error of close communion, as to make her willing to unite with us to-day, and this she promised to do, but when the invitation was given for us to take the middle seats, she sat still by the window ; and when the bread was handed to her, though it was done by her husband, she refused to take it. The fact of the business is, such conduct is so strange to me, that I can't account for it, and I want Grace to tell me why she acted so."

"I refused, because I can not commune with persons whom I regard unbaptized."

A tear rolled down her cheek as she answered his stern inquiry.

"Not baptized, child ! not baptized ! and what business is that of yours ? Well, it is a pretty business if you have got to tell us what baptism is ! Was there ever such boldness known, that a member of the most ignorant, bigoted sect the world has ever seen, should set up to tell Presbyterians what is baptism. The fact of the business—"

Here a fit of coughing, produced by a too rapid articulation, interrupted him in his tirade against the Baptists ; and Grace, no longer able to restrain her tears, rose and left the room. Fannie followed her ; but upon reaching the chamber, she could do nothing more than

throw her arms round her neck and mingle her tears with hers. The dinner, on the part of the young people, was finished in silence. Old Mr. Holmes told his wife and Mr. Robinson that Mr. Gordon would call early the next morning to have a talk with Grace about baptism.

"It seems, Brother Robinson, that something you said to-day put this contrary fit into her head, and now you must help Brother Gordon to set her straight again."

"I understand it all, Brother Holmes ; she believes in immersion as the only baptism ; and as I proved to-day that no one should commune who is not baptized, she felt that she had no right to commune with us whom she considers only sprinkled. Her conduct is perfectly consistent with her views. It will have to be made clear to her that the mode of baptism is not essential to the ordinance, and then, and not till then, will she, or could she, favor mixed communion."

"Well, you and Brother Gordon will have to convince her of that. I can not see why Baptists lay such a great stress on the mode ; they are the most narrow-hearted, narrow-minded denomination in the world ; Mr. Hall, their great man, says so."

"I suppose not, Brother Holmes."

"Yes he does ; those are his very words ; Brother Gordon read them to Grace the other day from his own works."

"Why does not Brother Gordon come this evening ?" inquired Mrs. Holmes, desirous to prevent her husband from further quoting, or rather misquoting Mr. Hall.

"He has to go to see Mrs. Daniels, who is sick, and

sent for him ; and he said Grace would be more composed by morning, and better disposed to listen to him."

Diamond had, in the interim between the first and second courses, laid aside her fly-brush on the pretense of a call to the kitchen, and hastened to tell Aunt Peggy that " Miss Gracey had bust out cryin' at sumthin old Massa had said to her 'bout co'munion, and had gone up stars."

Aunt Peggy, knowing that dinner was not yet over, and supposing that there was no one with Grace, found her way to her room by the back stairway, with the desire to console her, if possible. She knew from what Diamond had told her, that the topic of yesterday's conversation had been introduced at the dinner table ; and she, fully acquainted with her master's excitability upon this subject, judged that he had said something about the Baptists, which had wounded her feelings.

" What is the matter, Miss Gracey ?" said she, stealing quietly up to the bed-side, and laying her hand kindly on Grace's arm ; " Di'mond jes told me you left de table in tears, an' I thought while dey war all eating dinner below I'd cum up an' see what ailed you ; is you sick, child ?"

" No, Aunt Peggy, I am not sick ;" answered Grace, as she raised herself from the bed and wiped away her fast-falling tears.

" Well, what is you cryin' 'bout, child ? You can tell Aunt Peggy, an maybe she can console you a little. Little Fannie here," she said, familiarly patting her cheek, " us'd to tell me all her trubbles, an' I b'leeve she

would yit if she had any ; but now dat nice young man comes to see her so often she don't 'pear to have no more grief."

" Father spoke to Sister Grace about not communing with us, to-day, Aunt Peggy."

" An' didn't you co'mune to-day, Miss Gracey ? I set in de gallery, whar I couldn't see you. I seed de deacon pass to old Massa's seat, an' I tried to see if you an' Massa John took sakerment, but I couldn't. I heard what Mr. Robinson said 'bout baptism, an' I thought of what I told you yisterday, an' says to meself, if Miss Gracey kin co'mune to-day, it's more'n I kin."

" No, Aunt Peggy, I did not commune ; I could not ; and I never can partake of the Lord's supper with any who are not baptized believers. They must not only be baptized, but they must be believers when they are baptized. I find that no others have a right to commemorate the death of our Saviour but those who have willingly followed him in baptism."

" Dat's de door, Miss Gracey—I speaks of 'mersion—an' all other ways are yinders an' chimblys. What does you think 'bout it, Fannie dear ? Don't you think our Saviour went down into de Jordan an' cum up agin ; an' don't you think he done dis to give us an exampler to follow, an' do you think dat he or his disciples knowed any other baptism ; an' if they didn't, has any man a right to interduce any other ?"

" I believe the Saviour went down into Jordan and came up again, Aunt Peggy ; for the Bible tells us plainly that he did ; but there are some places where it speaks of baptism, which do not mention water, and we have no reason to suppose there was enough to immerse

a man in ; and if there was not, and persons were baptized, as the Scripture tells us, then there must have been some other way."

"Them places says nothin' 'bout there bein' much or little water, an' you can't prove thar was any water thar at all ; you jes have to suppose so, an' you had jes as well suppose thar was a big pool as dat thar was a little one. In all sich cases, whar no water is talked about, we has to go to the exampler of our Saviour. When it says baptized, we must find out what dat means, an' de only way to do dis is to go back whar it was first done, an' thar we see John the Baptis' leadin' our blessed Lord down into the water an' bringin' him up agin."

"True, Aunt Peggy ; that all seems very plain. I have always found more going down into the water and coming up again, in the New Testament, than I have ever found sprinkling ; but the latter must be right, or so many wise and good men would not believe in it."

"Ah, Fannie, dear, we musn't trust too much in what de great men says, but find out fer ourselves what de word of God says ; larned men sometimes goes mity far out of de way, an' it won't do fer us to follow arter dem. We mus' sarch de Scriptures, fer dey can make wise de simple, an' dey is clar enuf on dis pint fer us all to understand what de Saviour has told us to do."

"What good advice is that you are giving my wife, Aunt Peggy ?" said Mr. Holmes, as he entered the half-open door.

"I has jes been tellin' Miss Gracey dat she did 'xactly right dis mornin' not to take co'munion. Don't you say so, Massa John ?"

"Why, yes, Aunt Peggy, I believe every body should

act as they believe to be right on this subject as well as in all others ; you know this has always been my doctrine."

" Yes, Massa John, I know you has always bin lib'ral in your views, and I'se glad to see it ; for I feels dat you will not want to persuade Miss Gracey to join your church."

" Most assuredly not, Aunt Peggy. She shall do just as she pleases about that."

" Dat's right, sir. Come, Miss Fannie, let us go down stairs ; I 'spect Massa John can console Miss Gracey better dan we can."

The remainder of the evening was spent by Grace and her husband in the study of the subject of baptism. The result future chapters will show.

CHAPTER VII.

A CONVERSATION ON BAPTISM BETWEEN GRACE AND THE MINISTERS.

"Good morning, cousin," exclaimed Annie, as she entered the room before Grace had time to answer her rap at the door. "What! reading so early? You should be out taking the fresh air, and letting the kiss of the glorious sun drive away that ugly shade of anxiety which has been dimming your cheerful brow, and robbing your peachy cheek of its bloom;" and she bent down and kissed that now pale cheek, over which the rose-tint was fast laying itself with its own exquisite pencil.

Grace raised her eyes from the book in her hand, and looked up into Annie's face with an expression of beseeching earnestness.

Did Annie understand the real cause of that pallor, and that shade? Did she know that fearful apprehension and dark forebodings were in the heart of that uncomplaining sufferer to rob the life-current of its vitalizing energy as it sped on its way to "the peachy cheek and pearly brow?" She knew to some extent the unpleasant nature of the present circumstances. She read the outer life, and her generous heart answered to her cousin's sorrow in thrills of quick, deep sympathy. But there is an inner life known only to ourselves and to

God, and this she had not, and *could not* penetrate. No human hand can rend the vail which shuts it in from mortal vision.

"I have been in the greatest haste to get all things ready for my departure, that we might have a little conversation, *sub rosa*, before I leave. I knew that unless I snatched this early hour to have a word or two with you about home, I should have no other opportunity; so I was up at early dawn, to fold, and place, and pack. What a world of trouble it is to go through a regular trunk-packing; how I detest it!"

"Why did you not call on me for assistance, Annie? you know, at school, this was always my part of the preparation for home, and it is one of my few accomplishments that I have not forgotten."

"O, it is time I was accomplishing myself in this very necessary branch of a young lady's education; I can now no longer have you to do it for me. I do wish that, in this age of useful inventions, they would hit upon some contrivance to make carpet-bags and trunks, band-boxes and cabas, gather up and deposit their own stores. But tell me what is this you are reading, so early?"

The rose-tint deepened on the young wife's cheek. Despite her efforts, her nervous excitability would trace itself on the fair canvas in the most beautiful of all colors.

"It is Booth's 'Pedo-baptism Examined,' " she answered, as the drooping eye met the page she had just been reading, "a book which Father Miller gave me, very soon after that little discussion he had with Mr. Ross, the Presbyterian minister."

"So you are burnishing up your arms, coz, for the

impending conflict," said Annie, in a tone of assumed gayety. "Well, put on your whole armor, and draw your sword from its scabbard, for you have to encounter veteran soldiers."

This last sentence was pronounced in a voice half playful, half earnest ; but its cheerfulness did not bring confidence to the throbbing heart of Grace ; its pulses leaped wildly on, burying them beneath the small degree of self-reliance she had felt, and which had been greatly strengthened by the clear, convincing arguments of the great "Vindicator of the Baptists."

She struggled to suppress her emotion, but the stirred fountain would well up. A tear gathered in her eye, and fell upon Annie's hand, as it rested on the open book in her lap. Annie started. Looking up from the paragraph, over which she had been glancing, she perceived her cousin's deep agitation, and feeling that she had spoken too lightly of a subject which now involved her happiness, she threw her arms around Grace's neck, and bending a look of imploring love upon her, said :

"Forgive me, dearest Grace ; I did not think this was so great a trial to you. I saw your struggle yesterday, and the glorious triumph of your principles over love, and I supposed that the fury of the storm was past ; that, convinced, as you are, of your duty, you would be able to persevere in the right, defiant of all opposition."

"You do not know, Annie, how hard it is to do right, when we feel that, in so doing, we incur the displeasure of those we love, and whom, aside from all minor considerations, we are called upon, by the teachings of God's holy word, to respect and reverence. Only the full, conscientious conviction that I am acting in view

of the precepts and example of my blessed Redeemer could enable me to take the stand I have, and to form the determination to persevere in my cause, despite the obstacles that may interfere between me and my purpose. I rely for assistance on his almighty arm, for whose sake I have thus decided to act."

"And I am glad, cousin, that you have decided thus ; and as long as you rest in this support, you have nothing to fear. You need not feel apprehensive with regard to the conversation of to-day, for did not Mr. Robinson state, and emphatically prove, on yesterday, that no individual has a right to take the step they are urging upon you, who has not been baptized ; and how dare they demand of you a thing which they themselves condemn ?"

"They *believe* themselves baptized, and it is upon *this* ground they base their plea."

"And you *do not believe* them baptized, and it is upon this ground you base your opposition to their desires. Now, which has the better claim to their position ? Shall they be permitted to enjoy their opinions, and you left in the quiet possession of your rights ? or shall you, merely because of their notions, be forced to yield your rights, and thus violate your conscience ? They can not now ask you to commune with them, unless they can prove to you that sprinkling, or pouring, or dipping your fingers in water, is baptism ; and this, I feel assured, they will never accomplish. All of their pouring on altars, and Abrahamic covenants, and notions of convenience and *gentility*, added to all the wisdom of all their synods and councils, and Dr. Lightfoots, could never make Grace Truman believe that any thing is baptism but immersion of the whole body in water."

Annie spoke warmly. As she concluded, she looked into her cousin's face with an expression of the fullest confidence in her orthodoxy, and determination never to swerve from the path she had chosen.

"Yes, Annie, you are right on this point. I am, ever have been, and ever hope to be, a believer in the baptism I have received ; but it is hard, hard to live ever combating opposers, who, believing their practice, if not the only true one, at least answerable to the requirements of God's word, must necessarily ascribe my course, in a great measure, to obstinacy, and suppose I might be convinced if I would. I look down my future life, and through its long years I see myself debarred from the privilege of communing with my husband, and ever stemming a current of opposition from his friends, which, if it does not overcome my strength, will at least be sure to make shipwreck of much of my happiness. This, this, Annie, is the strongest argument they can use ; this, with more power than any other, rears itself against my firm persuasions, and could I feel that I *might* yield without a sacrifice of my principles, it would remove from my way the greatest bar to my enjoyment that could be imagined." She paused a moment, and then resumed : " But I *can not, dare not* thus to act ; my obligation to God is paramount to all other considerations. Should I leave the plain way, which he has marked out for me to tread, and wander into paths of man's invention, would he not say to me, ' Unfaithful servant, who has required this at your hands ? ' I must forsake father and mother, ay, and husband, too, to follow in his footsteps, who has said, ' unless you do this, you are unworthy to be called my disciple.' It is

hard, it is hard," Annie, said she, casting upon the weeping girl a look of mingled pain and earnestness, "but my Saviour demands it, and I must obey."

"Do not despair, Grace," and Annie pressed her to her bosom. "He, who has promised, will be faithful. Do you not remember those consoling words of Father Miller, uttered by the bedside of our dear, dying Lydia? With what faith and child-like reliance he spoke of God's mercy and love to all who confide in him; how beautifully he dwelt upon the certainty of his promises, the magnitude of his mercies. I can never forget the more than earthly trust and resignation with which he pronounced the last words of that divine exhortation, 'Even so, Father, for thus it seemeth good in thy sight.' That look is with me yet; those words are still ringing in my ears. O, how I wish I could be a Christian; could feel, in its fullest sense, as he did, the meaning of those holy words!" and her tears flowed afresh.

"And will you not," replied Grace, forgetting, for the moment, her own sorrow, "will you not, dear Annie, ask him, who alone can give you the submission which these heavenly words embody? And now," said she, laying her hand upon the one resting on her lap, and looking at her with an expression of deep anxiety, "let me urge upon you, in this, our last interview, the necessity of seeking aid of him who is mighty to save; and who, in accents of beseeching love, says to each sinner, 'Come unto me, I will in no wise cast you out.' Could I, Annie, but see your kind heart and generous nature truly submissive to his guidance, whose right it is to reign, I could forget my own deep trials in the great joy."

Annie remained silent ; her long lashes drooped upon her cheek, in which the color came and went, speaking in its many lights of the busy thoughts within ; then raising her tearful eyes, full of intense meaning to those of her cousin, and regarding her with a look of the deepest solicitude, she said :

“ And what, cousin, must I do to become a Christian ? ”

“ Ask of him, who giveth liberally, and upbraideth not.”

For a few moments both were silent. Each one seemed busy with her own thoughts. The words of Grace had fallen, with irresistible power, on Annie’s heart ; and the resolve was taken, which, in after days, brought peace and joy to the wounded spirit, and lit up, with heaven’s own light, the darkened depths of the sin-bowed soul.

After a pause of some minutes, Annie said, “ And what shall I tell your friends at home ? what shall I say to your father and mother, and Father Miller, about your becoming a Presbyterian ? Shall I tell them that you are, and ever will be, firm in the faith, steadfast in the apostle’s doctrine, about which Mr. Robinson spoke so convincingly, yesterday ? or shall I say you are somewhat wavering with regard to what you should do ? ”

“ Tell them, Annie,” and the gentle look of that soft, dark eye, faded out before the stronger light of holy, firm resolve, “ tell them I am a Baptist still, and with the help of my God, will ever remain one.”

Then the gentle, pleading, patient look stole back again, and mingled with that of resolve ; and in a voice of entreaty, she besought Annie not to mention to her parents the trials of the past week.

"Do not tell them, Annie, what I have undergone, I entreat you. I would not have their hearts pained with the thought of my sufferings ; severe and lengthened as they have been, I would rather endure them in silence. The consciousness that they do not know of them is a great consolation to me amid my gloom. I do hope—and yet why should I ?—that the conversation of to-day will end this painful contest, by convincing them that I am not to be driven from my stronghold by force or won by flattery."

"Then I may tell your friends at home that you are steadfast in the faith ?"

"Yes, that I am a Baptist, firm and immovable."

"Well, I will now leave you to fortify yourself as much as possible with the arguments, of Mr. Booth, while I go to have a farewell word with Fannie. She is a noble, sweet girl, cousin, and you will find in her a true, sympathizing heart. The teachings of old Aunt Peggy have influenced her greatly ; and although she is a member of her father's church, I do not think she is altogether a believer in her father's doctrine. But whether this be so or not, I charge you not to be overcome by a show of reason, to-day, but stand unmoved, and battle the enemy with true courage. If you can not pierce and demolish his fortifications, at least prove yourself invulnerable in your own. But hush ! there is the bell for prayers ; I shall not have time to go to Fannie's room. Let us go down."

She took Grace's hand, and they descended to the parlor. The family were all seated when they entered. Her husband entering at the same time, led her to a chair near his father. As she approached she bade him

good-morning ; his salutation in return was cold and forbidding ; a cloud rested on his brow, and an unusual sternness characterized his manner. You would scarcely have recognized in the grand, gloomy man, seated in the most retired corner of the room, the polite, affable, yes, gay escort of Grace on the previous day. The thoughts that were thronging his mind, were stamping themselves in plain, legible characters on his contracted brow.

A sedate pensiveness marked the look of Mrs. Holmes, which gave evidence of past disappointment and future apprehension. Indeed, the whole family appeared to be laboring under the weight of some hidden grief, which they could not banish. Each seemed to strive, but with futile effort, to bury his thoughts in the depths of his own bosom. Only the aged minister was free from restraint. Taking from the stand the old family Bible, he read that chapter of John containing the words of that divine prayer, which Christ offered up for his disciples before he passed over the brook Cedron, into the garden where the betrayer found him.

There are times in the life of every one when the glancing eye and changed brow tell tales of joy or woe we would fain hide from the world's gaze ; but the very effort mars our aim, and the mantling blush, and starting tear, and quivering lip, speak in language far more eloquent than that of sound, the soul's deep thoughts, the heart's dark sorrowings.

And thus it was with Grace. She knew, she felt, that her husband's eye rested on her with an earnest inquiry in its gaze she dared not meet, for fear that if she should, her self-control, which she found it so difficult to maintain, would forsake her in this her hour of

need. So, during the reading of the chapter, and the singing of the hymn, she kept her eyes fixed on the floor. When the exercises concluded, she stepped with him into the front yard, and there beneath the shade of the dear old trees, with the morning breeze kissing, with its cooling lip, her heated cheek, she told him all her fears, her hopes, her resolutions.

“You are right, my dear Grace, and have my entire approbation of your course. I would not ask you to sacrifice your sincere convictions because of your affection for me. As deeply as I love you, and as happy as I would be, could we together walk in all the ordinances of the holy Scriptures, I would greatly prefer, under present circumstances, indeed under all circumstances, that you would act out your sentiments, without regard to the differences of opinion which exist between us. Rest assured I shall never attempt to effect a change in your views nor shall I, after to-day, suffer the opinions of others to be forced upon your consideration. I would not be hasty in this matter, would not act rashly, but unless you can be left quietly to enjoy your own opinions, it will be my duty to place you where you will be free from such annoyance.”

“Do not, my husband, do not, I entreat you, leave your father’s house for my sake ; I can bear it all ; I am sure it will soon end ; if not, I must exercise ‘patient continuance in well-doing.’ Promise me you will not do this. Your father is old now, and leans on you for support. Do not leave him out of regard to my temporal peace.”

She spoke with earnestness and energy, as one pleading for an inestimable boon. Her husband met her

beseeking look, and the sternness of his countenance fled before it, like the evil spirit from the presence of divinity. But his words were calm and firm, as he answered,

"As I have said, Grace, I should be very sorry to leave my father's house, but my determination is fixed : unless you can remain here undisturbed in your religious views, we go out to find a home elsewhere ; these are the only terms on which I stay. Do not the same Scriptures, which teach obedience and love to parents, also command ' that a man shall leave his father and mother and shall cleave to his wife ? ' "

His words of confidence and love reassured her ; and the passing breeze wooed the tear-drop from her heated cheek, while the morning sun came down in its beauty, and smiled away the cloud of sorrow from her vein-marked brow ; and when the summons was given for breakfast, but few traces of her recent feeling could be observed. Yet one regret lingered in her heart : it was the thought of Annie's leaving her so soon. As they passed up the avenue, she saw the buggy, with the trunk strapped on, standing in front of the door, and turning to her husband, she said :

"I am very, very sorry Annie is going to leave us to-day."

"And so am I. But there is yet another who feels it far more than you or I, Grace."

"And who is this ? Has she led captive the heart of any of our village beaux ?"

"Why, is it possible, Grace, that you have not observed the deep interest Ed. feels in her ? What have you been doing with your eyes through the past week, that you have not seen it ?"

"My mind has been busy with other thoughts." He caught the expression of the upturned eye, and read its meaning.

"And is he really interested in her?" she asked, as they paused at the foot of the steps.

"Most certainly he is; and, as one proof of it, take the early call of this morning. Ordinarily he sleeps till a much later hour than this; it is now just six, look!" said he, taking out his watch and handing it to her, "and he has been here ten minutes at least, for I saw him at the front gate as we left the avenue for our seat under the old oak."

"Cousin, you will see, won't you, that Mr. Lewis does not disappoint me," said Annie, in an animated voice, as they entered the breakfast room. "He has pledged to bring Fannie and Lydia Clarke to see me during the early fall, and I wish you to stand surety that this promise shall be met; you know students and literary men are very absent-minded, forgetful creatures, so I will enjoin it upon you to keep him in remembrance of his word."

"He will need no reminder in this matter, Cousin Annie," said John, who cast at her a significant look. She blushed slightly under this very plain innuendo, but persisted, in her own laughing way, to insist that she could not rely on Mr. Lewis, even with Cousin John for security. "I must have Grace's guaranty that she will attend to the fulfillment of this gentleman's promise, and have him meet his vow to the very day."

"Did I engage for a certain day, Miss Annie? if so, give me the date, and I will enter it on my tablet; and if I fail to make my appearance, then dub me 'an ab-

sent-minded literary man ;' but until I shall thus have on wit, I beg you to spare me this most undesirable of all epithets."

Annie stood on the porch ready for her ride. Each member of the family had followed her out to take leave of her. She had exchanged parting words and bidden farewell to all but Grace, to whom she hesitated to say the last good-by. The merry laugh was gone, and the tears rushed to her eyes as she saw the weeping girl leaning for support upon her husband. Throwing her arms about her neck and pressing her to her bosom, in a voice almost inarticulate with emotion, she whispered in her ear words of cheer and comfort. But the voice of sympathy touching the heart of grief but causes the fountain to send forth fresh floods of sorrow ; and Grace wept aloud as Annie turned from her to descend the steps. Mr. Lewis stood ready to assist her into the buggy, looking scarcely less sad than Grace. Fannie reiterated her promise to visit "Forest Glen."

"Come back, Annie," said old Mr. Holmes, whose brow had somewhat relaxed its sternness under the expansive influence of Annie's cheerful geniality ; "come back to Weston very soon ; we'll all want to see you. Tom, you take care that she minds me, will you ?"

"I will, sir."

"Thank you, Mr. Holmes, I will be most happy to do so." Then, extending her plump, ungloved hand to Mr. Lewis, she lowered her vail, and the buggy passed from the door.

As it moved into the circle, disclosing the avenue, Grace saw Mr. Gordon nearing the house with a speed altogether unusual to him. Perhaps Mr. Robinson's

appearance on the porch, for he, too, had come forth to say good-by to Annie, had inspired him with fresh courage. Grace pressed her husband's arm, and turned to go in. "Let us go to our room, I wish to become more composed before I meet Mr. Gordon."

"You will, perhaps, succeed better alone, Grace ; I will remain here and be ready to accompany you into the parlor."

Old Mr. Holmes welcomed the pastor with marked pleasure. "Walk into the parlor, Brother Gordon, walk in, you and Brother Robinson." And as he led the young minister to the door, he said, in a low tone, "Be sure you get her straight to-day, for if you don't, all is lost ; the fact of the business is, I'm afraid it's too late now."

The words reached the ear, and arrested the attention of Mr. Lewis, who stood in the hall ready to leave. The remarks of Annie as they returned from the church, and the scene at the dinner table on the yesterday, both of which had been forgotten in other, to him, far more important thoughts, now flashed across his mind, and he determined to remain and hear the argument. He walked into the room and taking a seat near the piano, commenced carelessly turning the music.

Old Mr. Holmes, with the ministers, passed into the parlor, and seating themselves at the further end of the room, engaged in a low, earnest conversation. These words, alone, reached Mr. Lewis: "I'll tell you what, Brother Gordon, you and Brother Robinson must do your best ; she is mighty strong on that point, and you will have hard work of it ; but I want you to convince

her it must be done. The fact of the business is, I haven't any use for Baptists in my family."

The husband paced the hall in great agitation. At intervals, as his father's excitement grew stronger and stronger, he heard the words "baptism, change Grace." Observing a pause in the conversation, he stepped into the room and confronted the trio.

"Gentlemen, I have one thing to demand of you before this controversy begins, and it is, that my wife be allowed the free expression of her opinions, and where you can not answer her questions in plain English, you will not seek to confuse her by taking shelter under Greek lexicons and Latin fathers." Mr. Lewis was astonished at his excited tone and manner; the gentlemen looked up surprised, but he continued: "Father, I have a request to make of you, and one that I insist upon; if Grace shall fail to be convinced this morning, she must not again be subjected to such an ordeal. Worse than the fierce hate of the inquisition is this repeated effort to make her give up what she believes is right and duty. And, after this, she must be left to the quiet enjoyment of her own sentiments, or she no longer remains under your roof."

Mrs. Holmes entered as he finished these last words. Her astonishment was beyond bound, as she heard the threat of her son.

"You will not take Grace from us, my son," she said, gently laying her hand on his arm; "you are excited now, and do not know what you are saying." He turned upon her a look of determination softened in its expression by the gentleness of her manner and tone, and that love and reverence which he felt for a

mother whom he regarded as the most excellent of women.

"I say, mother, and I mean just what I say, that, unless Grace can stay here in peace, she shall leave. She shall not be subjected to this tormenting persecution, for nothing else can this dogged attempt to make her give up her present views, be called."

Releasing himself from his mother's hold he left the room. Mr. Lewis rose to follow him, but thinking any attempt to calm his excited feelings would now be useless, resumed his seat.

"Bring Grace down, John," said his father to him as he went out; "tell her Brother. Gordon wants to see her this morning."

"And for what?" muttered he between his teeth, as with quick step he found his way up stairs. He entered his wife's presence trembling with excitement. She cast upon him a look of unfeigned surprise. Seating himself by her side, he took up the book which she had laid down on his entrance, and turned the leaves with startling rapidity; then closing it and dashing it down on the window sill, he exclaimed in a voice hoarse with passion, "It shall not be so; you shall not stay here another day to be insulted and persecuted. They have no right to torture you in this way, Grace. I won't submit to it."

"Be calm, my husband, be calm. I am not insulted, I am not persecuted."

"But I say you are, Grace, and if it does not stop to-day, you must leave this house."

"It will all be over to-day. Do calm yourself; you are too much excited now to speak on the subject."

And she smoothed back the hair from his throbbing forehead, and pressed his nervous hand in hers.

"Yes, I know what I have said, and I will not retract. You must be left unmolested for the future."

"Do not give yourself so much uneasiness about me ; if I am in error, let me be convinced ; if they can not do this they will be driven to leave me to my own views. There is but one point of difference between us now—Mr. Robinson himself said so yesterday at the dinner table, Annie told me—and this is baptism ; and upon this subject my mind is fully made up. I can not be changed here."

Her gentle manner and kind words lulled the angry flood of passion ; the "peace be still" was spoken, and immediately the swelling billows were hushed to rest.

"Did your father say any thing about my coming down ?" she asked, after a few minutes' pause, in which he had almost regained his usual composure.

"Yes, he told me, just as I was leaving the room, that Mr. Gordon wished to see you ; and if you choose, we will now go down and have the matter done with. To-day shall end it."

"I am perfectly calm," she answered, taking up from the window the book he had dashed down so violently. "I may not be able to answer all of their arguments, and I do not believe they can answer all of mine. I wish to ask them a few plain questions, which, if they will treat candidly, I think will prove to your father that they, and not the Baptists, are 'the sectarian and bigoted sect.'"

She took his arm and descended to the parlor, where she found the company in anxious waiting for her.

Fannie was seated by her mother on the sofa ; little Neddie bowed on her knee, admiring the bright colors of the worsted, with which she was embroidering him a cover for his little green stool. Mr. Holmes sat to the right of his wife, and rather apart from the ministers, who, side by side, confronted a great rocking-chair, intended for Grace. And in the corner near the door sat old Aunt Peggy, who, with permission from her mistress, had come in "to hear what Massa Robinson had to say 'g'inst Miss Gracey's baptism.". Every thing was ready for the trial. There sat the judge, Mr. Gordon, with his hand resting on the open leaves of the family Bible, which he had been turning with a rapid indifference, that led some of the beholders to suspect that his mind was ill at ease. Mr. Robinson was calm and collected ; his hands folded on his breast, and his eyes bent as if in thought. There was old Mr. Holmes, witness against her, evidencing, by the cloudiness of his brow and the restlessness of his manner, that although his feelings and testimony were opposed to her, yet his apprehensions as to the result of the case were entirely in her favor. Mrs. Holmes and Fannie, silent spectators, betrayed their deep interest in the approaching trial ; the one regarding the issue, and hoping it might be against her, yet deeply sympathizing with the culprit ; the other thinking only of the gentle, suffering girl.

Grace entered, and, approaching Mr. Gordon, spoke with a collectedness which astonished the young pastor, and which, for a moment, threw him quite off his balance. In turning to take her seat, she met the eye of her father, but her smile only served to darken the cloud of disapprobation shadowing his brow. Her hus-

band took a seat at Fannie's left, between her and the prisoner's bench. As Grace seated herself in the designated chair, old Aunt Peggy drew up behind her, in order that she might distinctly hear all that was said, and if necessary give her what assistance she could. Mr. Lewis remained at the piano ; he determined to be a silent, attentive listener.

For a few minutes there was a deep silence, which each member of the company seemed fearful to disturb. Grace turned the leaves of the book in her hand until she found the desired page, then retaining the place with her finger, closed the volume and remained perfectly calm. Old Mr. Holmes looked at Mr. Gordon to begin ; but that worthy gentleman, instead of obeying his silent bidding, only gave himself an uneasy turn in his seat, and looked at his brother minister ; he, with his eyes fixed on the floor, continued *thinking*. The old gentleman, seeing that the electric shock from his surcharged brow failed to reach Mr. Robinson, and had spent itself unavailingly upon the medium of communication, determined himself to begin the attack ; so fixing his eye on Grace, as if to be certain of her understanding him, he said in a slow, measured speech :

"Grace, you know Brother Gordon has come here to-day to talk to you about your reasons for not communing on yesterday, as you had promised us to do."

He thought this would disturb her equanimity, but she quietly answered :

"I was not aware that was the object of Mr. Gordon's call ; I thought it was to converse with me on baptism. I would say to Mr. Gordon, relative to my conduct of yesterday, that I could not, and never can, commune

with those whom I regard unbaptized, and I hope this will be sufficient explanation to him for my disappointment of his expectations." The color came to her cheek, but she continued : " The arguments he deduced from Mr. Hall, joined with my desire to avail myself, if possible, of the privileges of my husband's church, decided me to take a step which hitherto I had regarded as wrong more because it would have been a deviation from the rules of my church, than from any settled belief on the subject. But your sermon of yesterday," addressing Mr. Robinson, whose reverie seemed to have ended, " fully convinced me that it was wrong not only because it was an infraction of the authority of my church, but because it would have been a direct setting aside of the authority of him who has established the ordinance, and who has said, ' Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I have commanded you.' "

The color deepened, but further than this, she betrayed no signs of increased agitation.

" Believing, as you do, on the subject of baptism, Mrs. Holmes, you would have done wrong to have availed yourself of my invitation to commune on yesterday. You acted altogether right in refusing participation with us ; but let me ask you, do you not think your church lays too much stress on baptism—the mode and means by which we show that we have received forgiveness for our sins, have become dead to them, and are now willing to walk in newness of life ? "

" I think, sir, on this very point you will find that the mode for which I contend, and which I believe is the only one, is that alone which expresses symbolically the sentiment embodied in your last words. You say,

sir, that we become dead to our sins, and Paul says, 'We are buried with him by baptism into death'—this death to sin of which you speak—'and are raised up from the dead to walk in newness of life.' Now, Mr. Robinson, it appears clear to my mind that immersion is the only mode which expresses the burial and resurrection here spoken of, and that no other could be devised that would. Will you turn, Mr. Gordon, to these verses, in the sixth chapter of Romans, and read them?"

"That's a fact, Miss Gracey; bless de Lord," said Aunt Peggy.

"Never mind, never mind, Bro. Gordon, we haven't got time to be reading all the Bible says about baptism. The fact of the business is, Grace, if you can't prove sprinkling, you can't prove dipping, and there the matter ends."

"But I think, father, we can prove dipping clearly. Have you found the place, Mr. Gordon? You will please read it."

The minister read: "Know ye not that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ, were baptized into his death. Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death; that, like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life." (Romans, vi. 3, 4.)

"This, indeed, Mrs. Holmes, seems very clear, and were it the only place in the Bible where allusion was made to baptism metaphorically, there would be no doubt as to the manner in which it should be administered; but in 1 Cor., x. 1, 2, Paul says: 'All our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea; and were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud

and in the sea.' Here, you see, the apostle expressly says all were *baptized* unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea, and in this there was no dipping, yet it is said they were baptized."

"Well, I am sure, Mr. Robinson, there is no mention of pouring or sprinkling, and you must acknowledge that with a bright cloud above them and a wall of water on both sides, the condition of the Israelites resembled, as strikingly as it is possible, the condition of a person immersed or covered in the water, when he is baptized."

"Dat it did, Miss Gracey ; bless de Lord." And old Aunt Peggy moved her chair further round to Grace's left, where she might see her as she spoke, regardless of the fact that she was in very near proximity to Mr. Robinson. She gave a little twitch at her cap-string, and putting her feet on the round of the chair, rested her elbow on her knee, and, leaning her chin on her hand, gazed directly into her face.

"The fact of the business is, Grace, you Baptists are always conjuring up something to support you in your hide-bound notions," said the old gentleman, with a pleasant smile altogether unexpected ; "nobody but a Baptist could ever have made that pretty figure of yours, out of the Israelites crossing the sea."

"Well, doesn't it seem very plain, father ; do you see any sprinkling about it ?"

"Tut, tut, child ; how do I know but the clouds were sprinkling down all the time. Wasn't it so, Brother Robinson," said the old man, seemingly delighted with the new idea which had entered his brain, lighting up, what before, from Grace's explanation, was rather dark. "The fact of the business is, I do believe

it was just that way," and he triumphantly rose from his chair and stood before Grace.

Mr. Robinson did not answer.

"Yours is merely an assumption of the question, father. No allusion is made throughout the Bible to the sprinkling of which you speak; and, indeed, there are no circumstances connected with the occurrence which give the most distant intimation of it. As the pillar of fire by night, so the pillar of cloud by day served to direct the Israelites in their way, moving before them when they journeyed, and hovering over their encampment when they rested."

"Fact, Miss Gracey; bless de Lord." And Aunt Peggy drew her chair up a little closer, and gave another twitch to her cap-string.

"Well, I know there is something said in the Bible about sprinkling that's just as clear as day, there where it talks about sprinkling the heart, Brother Gordon. Read it, and let my daughter see that our baptism is taught in the Bible," and the old gentleman, like Aunt Peggy, drew up his chair a little nearer to the minister, and leaned over the table.

"To what portion do you allude, Brother Holmes?"

"There where it says our hearts are sprinkled from an evil conscience; somewhere in Hebrews, I believe."

The minister turned the leaves hesitatingly.

"Why, you haven't forgotten where it is, have you, Brother Gordon? Brother Robinson, tell him the chapter, will you? The fact of the business is, I never remember where things are to be found." (Perhaps the old gentleman did not study his Bible.) "I never had much occasion to be hunting out texts to

prove any thing. Every thing is so plain to my mind, that I never could see the use of it."

And there are thousands in the world like old Mr. Holmes. All is so clear to their pre-conceived opinions, and educational prejudices, that they have no need to "search the Scriptures."

Mr. Gordon found the place, and clearing his throat by way of getting rid of his embarrassment, he proceeded to read: "Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water." (Heb., ix. 27.)

"Well, uncle, that does not serve you much," said Mr. Lewis, advancing from the piano. He had intended to listen silently to the arguments on both sides and then come to some decision; but his interest had so increased, that before he was aware of it, he had left his seat and joined the group.

"Tut, tut, Edwin, you know nothing about this matter; what right have you to say any thing?"

"I have a right to be convinced, have I not, uncle, and to express my convictions, too; and I must say, so far I think your arguments are against your position. Surely if that verse bears at all on baptism, it favors Cousin Grace; for we all know when we wish to wash any thing, we usually dip it into the water, instead of sprinkling water upon it."

"True, Massa Edwin; bless de Lord." And Aunt Peggy's attitude became still more earnest.

"Edwin, I think you had better sit down and be still. How is Grace to be convinced, if you are constantly interrupting us?" The old gentleman spoke with feel-

ing, and Mr. Lewis not wishing to add to his excitement, retired to his seat at the piano ; remarking as he did so :

“Pardon me, uncle, I will not again intrude an observation.”

Grace resumed the argument by addressing Mr. Robinson. “What do you regard, sir, as our guide in this matter ? If there is but one baptism, what do you consider this one to consist in ? Is it the baptism of the Spirit, or the pouring or sprinkling of water on the forehead, or the immersion of the candidate in water ?”

“To answer your questions in order, I would reply to your first, that the Scriptures are our only infallible guide ; to your second I would answer, that the outward baptism with water, either by pouring, sprinkling, or immersion, serves as a sign of the internal baptism, whereby, through the influence of the Holy Spirit, we are cleansed from sin, purified from evil works, and made new creatures in Christ Jesus.”

“Well, do you not think, sir, that as an emblem of this spiritual cleansing, immersion is far more significant than pouring or sprinkling ; and, moreover, do you not believe that we should follow the example of our Saviour ? Surely you can not think he was poured or sprinkled upon ?”

“Immersion may be more expressive, but I do not deem it essential to baptism. You know we do not contend for the mode ; we only want the figure of the spiritual cleansing, and whether this be given in pouring, sprinkling, or dipping, is immaterial ; either, to my mind, is valid.”

"Divers baptisms are spoken of in the New Testament," interposed Mr. Gordon, "and if we refer to the Old, we find that the Jews both poured and sprinkled, as well as dipped."

"That's a fact, Brother Gordon. Read to Grace some of the passages upon this point from the Old Bible, that she may see that the chosen people of God did pour and sprinkle their altars, and books, and things, and called it baptism."

The pastor turned to the Concordance, and found the word *sprinkled*. He then found Isaiah, lii. 15, and read : "So shall he sprinkle many nations." He then turned to Ezekiel, xxxvi. 25, 26 : "Then I will sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean." "A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you." Old Mr. Holmes's eyes sparkled with delight as the words "sprinkle you with clean water," reached his ear ; and when the minister finished the sentence, he rose, and clapping his hands exultingly, exclaimed :

"That's it ! that's it ! what do you say now, Grace ? ain't that as clear as the sun ? Don't it say, 'I will sprinkle you with clean water ?' You can't get over that ; it's too plain. The fact of the business is, I knew our baptism was in the Bible ; I knew you would have to give it up."

Aunt Peggy's earnestness increased ; she changed her position, and crossing her foot, fell to shaking it with most determined vigor. This, with her, was a certain sign of discomfiture. She could not tell how Grace would extricate herself from this puzzling situation. She looked at her with an intensity which attracted the attention of each spectator ; but Grace was not aware

of her anxiety, so much interested had she become in the discussion.

"What do you say now?" asked the old man, seeing she hesitated for a moment, while the color crimsoned her cheek.

Turning from her father to Mr. Robinson, she asked: "Do you regard baptism as a New Testament dispensation?"

"Most assuredly I do."

"By whom instituted, and whose is the example we should follow?"

"Instituted by our divine Redeemer, whose example is given for our guide."

"Then you see, father, if this be true, which Mr. Robinson admits, baptism has no connection with sprinkling of altars, nor with that passage Mr. Gordon has just read. Do you think, Mr. Gordon, that the Saviour's baptism should be our guide in this matter?"

"I do."

"Well, do you not believe that he went down into the water, and came up out of the water?"

"I do, Mrs. Holmes; but it rests with you to show that he was dipped under the water. This you will have to do by giving us the meaning of the word BAPTIZE. The water might have been poured upon him while he was in the Jordan, for aught we can learn from the passage."

"Mr. Robinson, do you not believe the word baptize means to immerse?"

"Sometimes it means this; another of its renderings is 'to pour.'"

"So you see, Grace," interfered Mr. Holmes, whose

uneasy manner and compressed lip betrayed his fear, "that you will have to give up. If you keep arguing, you'll just get things tangled so that you'll not know head nor tail of the business. If that word means to pour or to sprinkle—and I know it does—why do you want people to go down into the water to be dipped? I am certain it is far more decent. You'd just as well admit that it don't matter about the mode, so the heart's right: just as well have two or three drops, as all of the Atlantic ocean."

"Let me ask Mr. Robinson one other question, father. Do not the Greeks of the present day immerse?"

"Yes, that is their mode."

"I think, sir, this settles the point conclusively. They certainly know the meaning of the word, and, if I am not mistaken, this has always been their practice. Is it not so, Mr. Robinson?"

"I believe it has."

Aunt Peggy could not see the force of Grace's argument, but she judged from her manner that she had triumphed over Mr. Gordon. She shook her foot more violently, and "blessed de Lord."

John was delighted with the plain, forcible manner in which his wife defended herself, and with the pointedness of her attacks. He felt that on the subject of baptism, Father Miller had shown himself a most excellent teacher, and Grace had proved a ready pupil. Mrs. Holmes saw that she was not going to yield her opinions; indeed, she did not think she ought. Fannie leaned to Grace's side of the question in her judgment, and determined, at some future time, to have a conversation with her, that she might learn the extent of her

argument. Mr. Lewis found the subject opening up before him in a manner so entirely new and interesting, that he formed the silent resolution to make it his study until it was perfectly clear to his mind—removed beyond the possibility of the shadow of a doubt.

“ Mr. Gordon, let us, by way of experiment, endeavor to substitute either pouring, or sprinkling, or washing, for baptized, in some passages where this word is used,” said Grace, opening the book in her hand ; “ this, perhaps, may serve to determine its meaning. I will just read you from this work I have, which will save the trouble of looking them out. Substitute washed for baptized in the words of Ananias to Saul (Acts, xxxii. 16), and it would read thus : ‘ Arise and be *washed*, and *wash* away thy sins ;’ and in those of Paul (Rom., vi. 2, and Gal., ii. 27), ‘ Know ye not, that so many of us as were *washed* into Jesus Christ, were *washed* into his death ? As many of us as have been *washed* into Christ have put on Christ ?’ If you use poured, we must read (Mark, i. 9 ; Acts, ii. 38, 41) thus : ‘ Jesus came from Nazareth, of Galilee, and was *poured* of John in Jordan. Repent and be *poured* every one of you. Then they that gladly received his word were *poured*.’ If you take sprinkled, then the following verses (John, iii. 23 ; Rom., vi. 4 ; Col., ii. 12) will read thus : ‘ And John also was *sprinkling* in Enon, near to Salim, *because there was much water there*, and they came and were *sprinkled*. Therefore, we are *buried* with him by *sprinkling* into death. *Buried* with him by *sprinkling*.’* Now it seems to me that such a substitution is not only very awkward, but highly absurd. Whereas, if you use

* Pedo-baptism Examined, Bap. Lib. Vol. i, p. 359.

our word immersion, it not only makes good sense, but in each passage where it is used, fully carries out the figure."

While the pastor was searching his brain for an answer, Grace turned a leaf and read: "In regard to Luke, xii. 50, if you render the word baptism by the term washing, you not only sink the vigorous idea, but convey a sentiment foreign to the text. For the term *washing* plainly suggests the notion of cleansing, whereas it is manifest that our Lord here speaks of *himself* personally; of himself, not as to be cleansed from sin, but punished for it; or, as the apostle asserts, *made a curse for us*. To adopt the word pouring, would exceedingly dilute and impoverish the marvelous meaning, if not render the passage absolutely unintelligible; and from using the term sprinkling, common sense turns abhorrent, as it would render this emphatical text quite ridiculous. For who can imagine that our Lord intended to represent his most bitter sufferings by the act of sprinkling a few drops of water on a person."*

"We admit the force of this reasoning, Mrs. Holmes, and we also admit the validity of immersion. All we contend for is, that either pouring or sprinkling will answer as well as dipping. Indeed we think there are instances of baptism mentioned in the New Testament Scriptures, where the probabilities are against the last named mode. Take for example the three thousand baptized on the day of Pentecost, and that of the jailor who was baptized 'the same hour of the night;' now it appears to me there are in these two cases insuperable objections to the mode you contend for, and if so, there

* *Pedo-baptism Examined*, Bap. Lib., Vol. i., p. 360.

must have been some other ; and if it be admitted that in the days of the apostles there were even two methods, it clearly proves that the manner or mode is not essential ; the only thing absolutely requisite is the proper element."

"Will you, if you please, turn to that chapter, Mr. Gordon ; I have heard it explained in a manner entirely satisfactory to my mind. Does it not say, in the first verse of the chapter, that they were all with one accord in one place ? Now there must have been the twelve apostles, and the "other seventy" which Christ had sent out ; in all, eighty-two administrators. Peter commenced preaching about the third hour, which, I believe, is 9 o'clock in the morning ; and it is supposable, from the reading of the chapter, that his sermon closed as early as 11 o'clock, at least. Now, if you make the calculation, you will find that they had ample time to immerse the three thousand, and it does not say that that number was baptized—only that they were added to the church. The probability is, many of them had been baptized before ; for it says they were *all* with one accord in one place."

"But stop, Grace, let me make the calculation ; the fact of the business is, I don't believe a word of their being able to baptize three thousand in one day."

The old gentleman took a pencil from his vest pocket, and opening a book on the table, put down 3000 with a nervous hand.

"How many baptizers did you say there were, Grace ?"

"Eighty-two, sir."

With the hope of victory lighting up his countenance,

he quickly put down the figures, and made the first division ; the line was drawn with quite a flourish, and the subtraction made ; then the upper cipher brought down, and another division. His eye sparkled with triumph as he saw thirty-six in the quotient (three hundred and sixty he thought to himself, while a smile of pleasure gathered round the corners of his mouth—they could not do it). The second multiplication was made ; another line drawn, and the old gentleman looked up for another cypher. His brow grew more compressed ; the smile fled ; he rubbed his forehead, and went over the figures ; but there was no mistake. Thirty-six it was—not three hundred and sixty.

“ How many ? ” asked Mr. Lewis, enjoying his uncle’s evident confusion.

The old man took a second look to see if it could be so ; and then hesitatingly answered : “ Only thirty-six apiece, and fifty-four remainder. Well, I wouldn’t have believed it. I never made the calculation before : I always thought that was a poser to the Baptists. I always thought this was one place that you couldn’t possibly make immersion out of. The fact of the business is, you are pretty well posted up, Grace. But what do you say to the jailor ; are you going to show by figures that he might have been dipped in the prison room ? ”

“ If you remember, father, Paul and Silas had been brought by the jailor from the “ inner prison ” into the “ outer court ; ” and I have read from the best authority, that the prisons, in those days, had fonts in these courts, in which the prisoners were required to bathe daily ; and I believe the jailor was baptized in one of

these fonts. Does not this seem a reasonable supposition ?”

“No use to reason with Grace any longer, Brother Robinson,” said he, as he threw the pencil on the table, and started from his chair, “you can’t convince her. That old preacher up the country has been filling her head with all kinds of arguments against us, and you had just as well let her alone.”

“You do Father Miller injustice, father ;” and a tear trembled in her eye at the thought of the dear old man’s being so wrongfully censured ; “he never attacks your denomination ; but when his position is called in question, he ably defends himself. What I know on the subject of baptism I gained from a debate which he had with a minister of your church, on this question.”

“We have never required of our Baptist friends to give up their mode for ours ; all we ask of them is to concede that ours is valid, and that it will answer the purpose of securing to us all the privileges of followers of Christ,” added Mr. Robinson, mildly.

“I regard baptism as the only door into the church, Mr. Robinson ; and I also think there is but one mode of baptism.”

“Truth, Miss Gracey, truth ;” and old Aunt Peggy looked round on the group with an air of defiance, as much as to say, “Dispute that if you can.”

“I do not believe in *modes of baptism*, sir ; I think there is but one action that can be denominated baptism, and that is immersion ; all other things, bearing this name, I regard as perversions. If you admit there are modes of baptism, that the only thing necessary is water, you may have as many modes as there are candi-

dates. This, sir, is the reason why Baptists never can admit the practice of your church. They are convinced that baptism is the immersion of a believer in water by one who is authorized to perform the act. This, and this only, is baptism to their consciences."

"You are right upon this point, Mrs. Holmes. Your church, perhaps, without being aware of it, in the very fact of using the term *modes of baptism*, admit that there are more methods than one. This, to me, has always been paradoxical."

"Well, well, Grace," said old Mr. Holmes, "you won't be convinced, that I see plainly and we had just as well give you up. Brother Robinson might stay here all the morning talking to you, and you would still keep on in your old Baptist notions. We will have to give you up for this time; Brother Robinson wants to go home."

"And forever," said her husband, rising from his chair, and standing by her side; "my wife has submitted herself to your reasoning on the subject of communion and baptism, and I think has acquitted herself fully from the charge of bigotry and ignorance; for the future she must be left to the peaceable possession of her own opinions. I do not ask of her to commune with me if she can not conscientiously do it. I would not have her to sacrifice her own convictions, merely to conform to an opinion of my church; so far from this, I not only admire her clear defense, but heartily approve of her decision;" and he looked at her with an expression of the deepest love and admiration.

CHAPTER VIII.

A PEEP INTO THE FAMILY CIRCLE AFTER GRACE'S CONVERSATION WITH THE MINISTERS.

THE sinking sun threw a flood of golden beams over the quiet village of Weston, and mantled the neighboring landscape with a beauty that rivaled those glorious sunsets of the Pyrenees, which woke to life and immortality the heaven-inspired pencil of Claude Lorraine.

"O God, let me die amid such scenes as these," burst from the swelling heart of the aged Plantade, as, after his weary, clambering march, he stood upon the toiled-for summit, while the glory of the upper world flowed down upon him from the sapphire heavens above, and streamed in living effulgence from moss-grown crag and snow-clad mountain height. And the prayer of the old man was answered ; and he laid him down to die amid those scenes, while from his lips there came the exclamation—"Great God, how beautiful, O, how beautiful !"

The heart of Grace echoed the old man's words as she gazed abroad in rapt admiration on the unspeakable beauty around her : "Amid such scenes as these, my Father, let me look my last on earth."

She had chosen the quiet seat beneath the old oak, there to spend an hour alone in close communion with her own soul—to retrospect with calm, clear eye, the

past three weeks. And as she did so, she asked herself these heart-searching questions, "Have I in all that I have done and said, acted faithfully to myself and my new-found friends? have I chosen and followed out my path of duty in the fear of God, and in justice to my own conscience? has my understanding been clear, my judgment unbiassed, my conscience faithful?" She asked herself these momentous questions in the light of eternity, divesting herself of considerations of present expediency, and imploring the aid of the Holy Spirit to direct her aright in her conclusions. She determined that their answer should decide her future course. If, after a zealous scrutiny, she could set to her past conduct the seal, "well done," she felt that no enticement should ever swerve her from the path of right, however narrow and rugged it might prove to her weary feet. But if, on the other hand, she should find that she had been influenced by prejudice, or misapprehension, or hasty conclusion, she would freely acknowledge her error and seek forgiveness from those that error had caused her to injure.

How strong she had been in the morning; how weak she was now! She had felt amid her triumph, like a victor who binds the laurel to his brow, while applauding thousands, as the voice of one man, proclaim his conquest. But that brow ached now beneath the chaplet's pressure; "and as a conquerer worn with much strife," she looked back upon the din of the battle-field with sickened heart.

With an earnest desire for truth and right, she examined closely her motives, her feelings, her actions. It was a delicate, a difficult matter, thus to weigh

thought, deed, and word ; but she nerved her soul to the task. And as a judge, upon whose decision rests the life or death of the trembling culprit, she bent her energies to the undertaking. Carefully, prayerfully, she surveyed the whole ground ; scanned every motive ; marked every desire ; weighed every argument ; considered every aim ; and she turned from the retrospect strengthened in the belief, that she had acted throughout the whole matter in view of her highest, her holiest obligations. And she returned heartfelt thanks to God that he had enabled her to pass safely through the fiery ordeal, though she knew her garments bore the smell of the flame. She had suffered much sorrowing, she felt that the hand of fearful doubt had worn away, by its irritating attrition, the buoyancy of her girlish joy.

She had been assailed, annoyed, persecuted. Suspicion and dread had been aroused in her bosom, and like the Druidical rocking-stone of old—which the finger of a child might set in motion, but which no giant's strength could stay—they went on, on, gathering increased momentum from their own movement.

She had stepped forth from her old home glad and happy. She had found a new home, 'mid loving hearts, 'tis true ; but they were not the old home-hearts, upon which she so long had leaned and found unbroken rest, into whose depths she had pierced, and there beheld, ever welling up, in the same unending flow, friendship, truth, and love. The Alpha of a new book had been learned, and the lesson had traced itself in dark, leaden lines upon her young and trusting heart.

Her purpose was formed ; her resolution taken. She

had counted the cost, and decided upon the conflict. Like the brave, calculating general, she looked the danger in the face, and went forth to meet it. She knew the consequences *might* be serious ; she believed they *would* be ; but she feared not to wage warfare for truth and right. God would be her strength and shield ; he would not suffer her to be tempted beyond what she was able to bear, “ but with the temptation would also provide a way of escape.” So she gave the matter into his hands, as unto a wise father, knowing that the working of all things would be for her good. And the Angel of Peace came down and folded his white wings over her soul. “ Thus he giveth his beloved rest,” who lean for repose upon the arm of Jehovah-jireh.

The notes of the village church-bell met her ear, as she sat there in her undisturbed loneliness, for it was the night of the “ Monthly Concert of Prayer for Missions.” The slow, solemn pealings, borne on the evening wind, called up a thousand memories of the past, which came stealing over her soul like the soft, low strains of the fire-side song to the wanderer’s heart in a far-off land.

She thought of her childish days, when she and her lost one—her own dear Lydia—tripped the woodland path to school ; passing, with beating hearts and noiseless tread, the way-side field, lest the phantom of their excited imagination should step forth, revealed in the frightful form of drunken white man or runaway negro ; of that quaint old country school-house, at the end of the narrow lane, where, on the high, backless bench, with arms around each other’s waists, they sat through the summer’s sunshine and the winter’s cold, learning their infant lessons from the same primer ; of their little

gardens, side by side, which, in the budding spring, displayed to their admiring eyes a wealth of floral loveliness, which they, poor little untaught children, believed to be the very extent and perfection of the "angel's alphabet."

Then the holy Sabbath morning, with its deep quiet and nature-breathing spirituality, when they went up with the people of the Lord to worship him in his earthly courts (Lydia sang his praises now in the heavenly temple); when the voice of the dear old man of God fell on their ears in tones of sweetest music (for the hand of age had not then introduced discord among the harp-strings); when her mother sang the air so sweetly, in her accustomed seat by the old square pillar, and her father led the bass, while Aunt Gray sang alto. She and Lydia had their hymn-books, too, presents from their dear grandmother, but they could not read, yet their childish voices might be heard sweetly singing "Am I a soldier of the cross?" and "When I can read my title clear;" for they had learned these precious hymns from Aunt Dolly, as this old Christian servant went about her daily duties, singing the praises of the Most High with the spirit and the understanding.

Then there arose before her, dressed in the colors of the living present, the baptismal scene, when they together followed the Saviour in this ordinance of his own instituting; when, hand in hand, they descended into the liquid grave, and rose therefrom to walk together in newness of life. "Let me never forget this dedication to thee, O my God! Help me! help me to keep my baptismal vow!" she exclaimed to herself, as her mind dwelt upon the solemn yet blissful consecration to the

service of him who was buried beneath the Jordan for our example.

Tears of holy memory bathed her face as there came up before her the spiritual passing away of that bosom friend of her childish days. She remembered how the cold, caught in that summer evening from the heavy shower, had seated itself upon the vitals to consume and destroy ; how first had come the hacking cough, that dread monitor of the last farewell and the winding-sheet ; then the hectic flush, and glassy eye, and failing step, and chill night-sweat ; then the shortened breath, and feeble pulse, and vein-marked temple ; then the chastened one in the old arm-chair, listening to the words of heavenly wisdom and consolation, which she, with faltering voice, had read to her, while the stricken one examined, with the eye of faith, her title to the promised mansion ; then the pale sufferer on the bed of death, with patient smile and holy look, as she lay there, with low, short breathings, exchanging her earthly tabernacle for " the house not built with hands ;" and, lastly, the cold, feeble grasp, and farewell look, and words of blissful trust, so faintly whispered ; then the smile which lingered on the death-sealed features, while the spirit, having " read its title clear," went up to possess the mansion in the skies. And when the earth wrapped itself in its many-hued winding-sheet, they placed the folds of the snowy shroud, and laid her down to sleep the sleep which knows not dreams nor waking.

Her bosom heaved with the tide of these varied memories, and tears of sadness and joy streamed from her uplifted eyes. A look of abiding faith and eternal trust, beautiful to behold, overspread her tear-bathed

features. The hands were clasped in prayer, the lips murmured the spirit's petition ; and the bending angel caught the words and bore them up before the Mediator ;—the Father heard for his own Son's sake ; and that peace which passeth understanding, diffused itself over the troubled waters, and stilled their heaving bosom.

Thus they find rest that seek of him
 Who hears and answers prayer.
 He marks the eye with sorrow dim,
 And naught but good can come from him,
 To those who are his care.

Thou sorrowing, sinking soul, where'er
 Thy earthly lot be cast,
 Thy crushing burden meekly bear,
 Yield not thy heart to dark despair,
 He'll give thee rest at last.

She rose from her seat, clad in the panoply of truth and trust. "I can do all things, bear all things, through him that strengtheneth me," she said, in a calm, confident tone, while her face glowed with an expression of love and truth which only strong faith in the immutable promises of God can impart. And while she wanders amid the flowers, to gather some for her husband when he shall return from the village, let us glance at the effects of the morning's discussion upon the other participants.

Mr. Lewis had listened to the debate with deep interest. It was a subject to which he had given but little consideration, having, from his recent associations, been led to think that the *mode* was of but little consequence, the only things essentially requisite being

faith exercised by the candidate, and the use of the proper element. Infant baptism he had always regarded as an unmeaning rite, and, as far as he was acquainted with the subject, entirely unscriptural. True, he knew but little about it, but he had always thought the reasons given by his uncle, in support of the practice, as light as air.

His interest in Grace as a young pleader against the wisdom of hoary years, the manner of her defence, her clear, convincing arguments, which the ministers had failed to answer, and above all the expression with regard to *modes* of baptism, and Mr. Robinson's consequent remark upon that point, had thrown a charm around the subject, which made his active, enquiring mind long to look into its heights and depths, and see what could be evolved in support of immersion. He determined to give all his leisure time to its investigation as soon as he could procure the necessary books, and for this purpose he consulted Grace before he left that morning. But she knew of nothing to recommend to him but the Bible, "Booth's Vindication," and a little book of "Conversations on Baptism," that had found its way into her father's family, she knew not when nor how, and which she had selected from the books in the old mahogany book-case, to read when she was a little girl, for no other reason than that it was a little book.

This she gave to Mr. Lewis, with a promise that she would write that very evening to Father Miller for a catalogue of the best works on this subject. He knew his uncle's library was well supplied with Pedit-baptist volumes upon which he could call ; for, like one who

digs for hid treasures, he determined to forego no labor in the prosecution of his undertaking. Nothing short of the whole truth could satisfy his eager mind.

Mr. Gordon was completely foiled. He had depended upon Mr. Robinson to conduct the controversy, but this gentleman had manifested strong indifference in the defense of the distinguishing tenets of his church. He seemed willing that the young Baptist should enjoy her own views without interruption, and not be forced to yield them to the dictates of feeling and convenience. So the young pastor had retired from the contest chagrined and disappointed, but with a firm resolve to gather up his weapons and be ready, at the first opportunity, to demolish the stronghold of opinion in which his opponent had intrenched herself.

But when he shall come again to the battle-field, his enemy will not be a timid feeble woman.

With all the ardor of a youthful combatant, he undertook the work ; he had not yet been led to Doubting Castle, as some older and wiser heads than his had been, there to see the untempered mortar with which this foundation of human device and expediency is daubed. That Carson, and Judson, and Noel, had suffered themselves to be drawn astray by some wild fantasy from the smooth highway, wherein stepped, in silken-slipped formalism, princes and princesses, and the most learned and reverend fathers, to walk with the "everywhere spoken against," in the strait and narrow way of Christ's own appointments, was, to him, an anomaly inexplicable, and he cared not to trace the steps by which this path was reached ; it was sufficient for him to know that it was a great departure from the

way his fathers and forefathers had trod. How mighty, with many, is the influence of precedents !

Old Mr. Holmes not only felt chagrined and disappointed, but he entirely forgot to "possess his soul in patience." His hopes had been so sanguine, his expectations so high, that to bear this sudden and unexpected fall with calmness, was more than his nature could do. His perturbation was manifest to every member of the family ; wherever he went, the same provoked restless manner marked his actions ; whenever he spoke, the same curt tone characterized his expressions. He even forgot, in bidding Mr. Robinson farewell that morning, the pressing invitation to return, which always accompanied the shake of the hand. Uneasy and irascible, he moved about the house, venting his spleen upon all objects animate and inanimate with which he came in contact. He chafed as the caged lion beneath the goad of its tormentors ; but the bars of truth surrounded his antagonist and he could not defy their strength. But was he to be driven from renewed effort by this consideration ? Let his words to Mr. Gordon, as that minister was leaving, make answer :

"It won't do, Brother Gordon ; it won't do. What, let this matter stop here ? it won't do. Give her up to her own headstrong notions just because you were not ready to answer all her questions ? No, no. I tell you, the fact of the business is, she must be brought straight. I can't, and I won't have any close communion people about me ;" and the old gentleman stamped his foot to give his assertion more emphasis.

Mrs. Holmes, although as sadly disappointed as her husband and the pastor, bore the finale of the contro-

versy with Christian submission. Her feelings had been deeply called forth in the result of a matter to her fraught with great moment ; for in its consummation she saw the harbinger of a unity which should preserve peace to her family, or the portent of evil in the form of separation and estrangement. And now, that the decision was made contrary to her most ardent hopes, she discerned skirting the horizon of the future, the cloud no bigger than a man's hand, which, unless averted by the will of him who directeth the storm, must inevitably burst in sorrow on her now happy household. Earnestly did she pray that this desolation might be turned aside. That heart-burnings and bitterness might not spring up where now flourished in perennial beauty the buds and fruits of confidence and love.

Old Aunt Peggy was rejoiced beyond the power of her words to express. She had listened to Grace's arguments with the most earnest solicitude, and her frequent exclamations of "dat's de truth, Miss Gracey, bless de Lord," testified her heartfelt gratification.

"Truth is mighty and must prevail," she exclaimed, as having hobbled to the door of the parlor, she turned round to view the group who sat in abashed silence, after the concluding words of young Mr. Holmes. Her feelings and convictions she detailed to Grace, in a conversation which took place between them a few days subsequent to this memorable morning.

As her husband returned from the village, Grace, having gathered her flowers, joined him in the avenue. As they moved toward her favorite seat, they saw Fannie approaching them from the house.

"What book is this you are reading, Fan?" Mr.

Holmes asked, as he took a seat between her and Grace, at the same time reaching out his hand to take the volume from his sister's lap. "Some old love-sick romance, to fill your head with fancies, which can never be realized. A sad waste of time, sis."

She betrayed a slight agitation as she raised the book to pass it to him.

"Well, I do think! Look here, Grace, will you? and see what Fan is reading."

The wife turned to see, but she did not need to scan the title-page to which his finger pointed; the old leather-backed "Vindicator" was too familiar, so she laughed and said, "The sin be upon me."

"Why, Fan, are you going to become a controversialist too?" he asked, casting a look of smiling approval upon the arch face at his side. "I would advise father and Mr. Gordon to look out for their standing now," he pleasantly remarked. "Such wise heads must certainly uptrip them."

"I don't wish to argue, Brother John, I'll leave that to Sister Grace; but haven't I a right to my own views about things; and isn't it as necessary for me to be right on all subjects as it is for older heads?"

"Yes, certainly it is your duty to know what is right, and in order to do this, you must study both sides of this mooted question. But don't you think Grace and Aunt Peggy will do to plead the cause of immersion without your aid?"

"Didn't I tell you, brother, I didn't wish to argue; but Sister Grace's defense this morning is the very thing that has put me to reading. I do believe, after all, she

and Aunt Peggy are right, and you, and father, and the rest of us are wrong."

"Come, come, Fan, you don't decide on such meagre evidence, do you? You would make a fine judge in one particular at least, that of expediting business."

"I didn't decide the matter, did I? I only said that I believe they are in the right, and I am trying to find out the truth. Oughtn't I to do this, Sister Grace?"

"Certainly, Fannie, 'Buy the truth and sell it not,' is the injunction of Holy Writ."

"And this is what I wish to do. I have been thinking of the conversation we had in your room last week, and particularly of Aunt Peggy's illustration of the room with its spread table, and the guests coming in at the windows. I can't get rid of it. And I feel it is my duty to see whether I have come in at the door or through the window; and I have determined to find out. Won't you assist me, sister?"

"With the consent of your parents, Fannie, I will give you all the aid I can. But knowing your father's bitter feelings against the practices of my church, I could not undertake this without his knowledge and approbation."

"But father has no right to trammel Fannie's conscience, Grace; she is now old enough to think for herself. Let him bring up his arguments and array them against yours, and if they are stronger to Fannie's mind she can decide in their favor; if not, let her act in accordance with the dictates of her own judgment."

"But you are aware, Mr. Holmes, of your father's feelings toward me already;" and a shade of sadness stole over her face and lingered in her tone as she spoke;

"and although the mere fact of my instructing Fannie on this subject could have nothing wrong in itself, yet, under the present circumstances, I believe I would be censurable in doing so. Upon this point I must be very careful. Knowing what is incumbent upon me, I must discharge to the uttermost my whole duty."

"Well, I am glad this unpleasant matter is ended, so far as you and father are regarded, Grace. You know the agreement—if you could not be convinced, he was to leave you to your own opinion." As he finished speaking, he turned to his wife for a word or smile of approval. But her face wore an expression of gloom and doubt.

"Why do you look so sad, Grace? are you sorry the contest is over, or do you wish to add more laurels to your wreath by bearing off the palm in another engagement?"

She regarded him with a deep earnestness, as she replied: "I care not for victory, only so far as it serves to support truth." She paused, then laying her hand upon his, she continued: "But the end of these things is not yet. I am not to be left peaceably to enjoy my triumph."

The tear that had gathered in her eye brimmed over, and found its way down her flushed cheek.

"You do not mean to say, Grace, that this controversy is to be renewed?"

"I would not prophesy evil. But you do not suppose your father will leave the argument in its present condition? We do not so readily yield our cherished hopes."

"Then we leave his roof," said he, turning upon her a look of excited determination. Fannie read its meaning; she knew the resolution which had given birth to that look, and those words, were not to be recalled.

"Let us dismiss this subject," said Grace, "it only calls up unpleasant feelings, and it is wrong for us to gather over the present the clouds of the future."

"My determination is taken, Grace."

A silence ensued, in which each one was busy with their own thoughts. At length Grace interrupted it by asking :

"Fannie, what nice young gentleman is this Aunt Peggy mentioned the other day, in my room, who has driven away all your sorrows?" "But the sorrows are few that come to your guileless heart," she said to herself, as she gazed upon the sweet face of the young girl. "I thought Aunt Peggy spoke significantly; am I mistaken? Tell me if I have seen this magician among the callers of the past two weeks?"

The young girl struggled with the embarrassment at her heart, and which she knew was mounting her temples, as she evasively answered :

"O, it is only one of Aunt Peggy's jokes, sister. She only said it to plague me a little."

"Ah, that tell-tale blush, Fannie! it speaks more than Aunt Peggy's words. Come, tell me who it is, that I may see if I concur with Aunt Peggy in her judgment."

"You do not know him, he left the morning after the party, and has been absent ever since."

"Of whom do you speak, Fan? of Nick Ray?"

The deepened blush gave answer.

"He came into town on the stage just as I was leaving, looking, despite the dust which coated him from head to foot, much improved by his trip to the mountains. But he is no beau of yours, is he? Fie, fie,

Fan, you are too young to think of such things ! Why, you are but a school-girl, yet !”

“But I am almost as old as Sister Grace, and as tall, too,” and she stepped from her seat, and placed herself before him. “My next birth-day will bring sweet seventeen. Besides, you have no interest in Mr. Hall’s school now, that you need wish me to go back. Do you know, sister, that it is to you I owed the many letters I received while at school, from my ‘affectionate brother,’ as you used to call him ? I assure you, half the contents of those frequent letters were inquiries about you. Don’t you remember my telling you that you were possessor of all of my secrets but one ? Well, this was that *one*, and I know you will approve the strictness with which I guarded it. You are in possession now of my whole heart.”

“Not if Aunt Peggy’s intimation has any foundation. You have yet a mystery unrevealed ; but perhaps I should not insist on an explanation.”

“O, you know it all already. Aunt Peggy has told you the relation he sustains, and Brother John has given you his name. It only remains for me to state that he is a clerk in Mr. Matthews’ store—a gay, dashing young fellow, who knows how to play the agreeable to perfection ; sports a moustache, a cane, and kid gloves ; visits all the girls, and knows all the flower emblems. How do you like the picture ?” and she made a low curtsy and ran toward the house.

“She is a sweet, gentle being,” said Grace, turning to her husband, as she lost sight of Fannie’s form, flitting through the dark green foliage of the evergreens ;

"do you suppose, Mr. Holmes, that she has any particular regard for young Mr. Ray?"

"No, I judge not. He has visited her frequently since her return from school; but I do not know that he has manifested any marked admiration for her. He is, as she told you, a *ladies' man*, and visits all the girls. I think he is not a young gentleman that Fannie could admire."

"Have you ever thought that Mr. Gordon felt an interest in her beyond that of a friend? There is something in his conduct toward her—I scarcely know what to call it—that has caused me to suspect that he has a secret admiration for her, which he scarcely dares to own even to himself."

"I had not thought of it. I know he appears very fond of her society; but I attributed it to the fact that, being often thrown with her, by his frequent visits here, he had come to look upon her as a younger sister. But now that you have called my attention to it, I will closely scrutinize his future actions. But come, it is growing damp; let us go in."

"Has Ed. been here this evening, Grace? but I suppose not, now the attraction is gone."

"No; I presume, like Fannie, he is studying the baptismal question. He declared his intention to give it a thorough investigation. I gave him a little book this morning, 'Conversations on Baptism,' and at his request have written to Father Miller for a catalogue of the best works on the subject. After viewing it in all its phases, if he should espouse my cause, I shall expect to find in him a most able defender."

"And you would not be disappointed; he looks clear

through a subject, and his powers of reasoning are very fine ; and with the influence he has, should he become a Baptist, he would sweep Presbyterianism from this community. He is regarded invulnerable, in Weston, on all subjects that he undertakes to advocate. We shall have but little of his company, now that Annie is gone. I would wager my best horse that he will make her a visit before the appointed time. Did you not observe how crest-fallen he looked after she left this morning ? I have never seen him look half so melancholy in all my life."

A few evenings after this conversation, Mr. Lewis, contrary to Mr. Holmes's prediction, called in. The family, as usual, were gathered in the hall, it being the most pleasant part of the house ; for, in addition to the fine breeze always found there, the landscape, which spread out from the rear of the house was most charming to look upon. The family were all present, for the business of the day was over, and they had assembled for social conversation and enjoyment. The children, with old Aunt Peggy to watch over them, were on the porch and playing round the steps in the front yard.

"Well, cousin," said he, as he seated himself and took up a newspaper from the hall table to fan himself with after his walk, "I have brought home your book ;" and he took from his pocket the "Conversations on Baptism," and handed it to Grace.

"What book ?" asked Mr. Holmes, suspecting in a moment some collusion between Mr. Lewis and Grace to oppose him and Mr. Gordon. As he asked the question he moved to the side of his nephew and took a

seat in a manner clearly indicative of the excited state of his mind.

"It is 'Conversations on Baptism,' between a Baptist and a Presbyterian," answered Mr. Lewis, apparently not noticing his uncle's uneasiness.

"Tut, tut, Edwin, you are not reading such things, are you? you had better be attending to your own business. What have you to do with baptism and communion?"

"Just as much as any other man who feels himself responsible for the views he entertains upon these great subjects."

"Well, have n't you always been a Presbyterian, and have n't you got reasons for being one?"

"If being sprinkled in infancy, and attendance upon the ministry of a Presbyterian church can constitute me a member, then I am one. But if it requires any thing beyond this, why, then I am not."

Seeing the cloud on his uncle's brow darken, and not wishing to arouse the storm, he added, in a playful manner: "But suppose I am a Presbyterian in sentiment, should I not fortify myself in Pedit-baptist argument so as to aid in overthrowing Cousin Grace's reasoning in support of different views?"

"O, yes, it's very well if you will do that; but as soon as people get to reading and prying into this matter, they want to go right down into the water. I never knew any good come of these readings and discussions; better let such things alone, and tread in the footsteps of the good men that have gone before us. They knew better what was right than we do"

"I think you take too much for granted, uncle. We have the same Bible they had, and as much light and information ; and I think it the duty of every man to be able to give a reason for his practice, particularly in matters of religion. And from your own statement it appears that there is either a convincing reason in one side of this argument, or else a bewitching fascination which takes captive the mind and heart of the investigator."

"Tut, tut, boy, you don't know what you are talking about ; people will go astray. The fact of the business is, the more they know the worse they do."

"If this could be established, uncle, it would at once put an end to all improvement. We should certainly desire to be good before great. But you can not think there is any sin in being immersed rather than sprinkled. Your wisest and best men admit its validity. And do you not think it was the apostolic mode ? So far as I have examined the subject, it seems to be the opinion of the learned of all denominations."

"I don't believe you can prove that the apostles dipped people, and suppose you could, what of that, if the Bible says sprinkle ?"

"But I do not think the Bible gives warrant for any such practice as sprinkling. I have read this little book in connection with those chapters of the Bible that speak of baptism, and I can see nothing, in statement or inference, against the practice of our Baptist friends ; but every thing in its favor."

"Didn't I tell you it was just so with every body that gets to studying and bothering about this matter ? They seem to lose their senses, and nothing will do

them in the end but going down into the water. It's an abominable, foolish practice."

The son started in his seat, but did not speak—it was his father !

"Not so fast, uncle, if you please ; let me ask you a few questions before I take your assertion as to its being a foolish practice. *Whom* do you suppose was the first person baptized ?"

"Why, our Saviour, boy, of course."

"Well, *what* do you think he was baptized for ?"

"To give us an example that we might follow."

"*How* do you suppose he was baptized ?"

The old man hesitated. He did not wish to acknowledge it, but it must be done.

"Well, I reckon he went down into the water and came up again ; but this don't prove that he went under the water. He might have had it poured or sprinkled upon him."

"So we might suppose, did not the text say, John 'baptized him.' Now, in this little book I have just read, the Baptist asserts, and proves from the testimony of the fathers, and the Presbyterian does not refute it, that the primary meaning of the word here used—*baptizo*—is immerse ; and any one at all acquainted with the history of the Greek church knows that this has ever been, and is *now*, their practice. This, to me, is a very strong argument."

"I don't care any thing for your far-fetched arguments." And the old gentleman rose and commenced striding the hall with rapid step. "It's a vulgar, foolish thing, this going down into muddy ponds and dirty creeks to be dipped under, head and ears, when a little

water, sprinkled on the forehead, in a genteel manner, would do just as well. No daughter of mine should be caught doing it, I tell you ; it's a low, indecent practice."

"My wife was immersed, father ; I hope you will spare her feelings ;" and the blood rushed to the temples of the speaker, while he fixed on his father a stern, unbending look.

Grace cast an imploring glance at her husband, but he heeded it not. He felt that his father had no right to add insult to injury, in thus speaking of an act to which she had not only submitted, but which he knew she regarded as binding and sacred, and he felt that, cost him what it might, she should be spared the insult. His mother saw his determination, and shuddered for the consequences. She knew the flame, so hard to kindle, had waked to life, and was ready to burst forth. Rapidly did it seem to be gaining power as the old man continued his remarks ; but she dared not interfere to extinguish it. Fannie saw its workings, and trembled. She remembered the resolution uttered beneath the old oak. The young wife gazed upon him in astonishment. She had never before seen him thus aroused, and dread apprehension seized her soul, as she beheld the fearful workings of increasing passion. Mr. Lewis knew that all attempts to stay its progress would but increase its force, and he wisely forbore any interference. Of all the group, old Mr. Holmes seemed the only one unconscious of its presence. Excited, maddened himself, he thought but of giving vent to his own feelings. As he strode the hall his words grew more and more harsh. Suddenly he stopped in the center of the group, and

stamping his foot, exclaimed, "Yes, I repeat it, it's a low, vulgar practice!"

The son confronted the father. In a voice tremulous with passion, he said, "Father, Grace shall no longer submit to such insults. You have persecuted and tormented her ever since she has been beneath your roof; you have tried to force her to commune with your church; when you saw she could not do this because she felt it would be wrong, you then wanted her to give up her baptism, and this, too, without proof; and now, when you find she will not do this, you call this baptism a low, vulgar practice! She shall no longer remain with you to suffer from such taunts. I have sworn, before God and man, to protect her, and this I will do, if it cost me my life. It is my duty to take her where she can enjoy her opinions unmolested, and I will discharge that duty. My wife shall be placed beyond your power to annoy and distress her; she shall no longer remain under your roof. I go to seek an asylum for her where she can enjoy her opinions in peace. Henceforth you need not regard us as members of your family." And taking his wife's hand, he led her from the hall.

CHAPTER IX.

THE VISIT TO FOREST GLEN.

WE must pass over the summer with its many changes, reserving the most important of these for a future chapter, and introduce to our readers scenes altogether different from those last described.

The summer had ripened into autumn. The woods had put their robes of glory on, which, under the transforming hand of maturing nature, were waxing old as a garment, and everywhere gave signs of decadence and decay.

The morning was bright and crispy, with just enough humidity in the atmosphere to spread over the awakening earth a misty veil that served to temper and soften the brilliant rays of the rising sun. The air was chill and penetrating ; the husbandman, as he stepped forth in his thick jeans surtout, buttoned it up to his throat to keep out the searching breeze ; house-girls unbolted the shutters cautiously, and shivering, involuntarily drew back as the nipping air rushed in through the open window ; and self-indulgent young ladies unclosed their eyes languidly, ascertained the temperature of the atmosphere, yawned, and turned themselves in bed for another nap.

It was a morning of busy activity at Mount Airy, for

it was the day of the departure of Mr. Lewis and the young ladies to make the promised visit to Forest Glen. Every body was astir betimes, that the travelers might get an early start, for the road was rough, and the shortened days of mid October gave them but just time to reach their destination before sundown. Lydia Clark, in order to avoid any delay, had come to spend the night with Fannie. And the gentlemen gave their word, as they left the door the evening before, to be in waiting by seven o'clock the next morning.

"I'll wager you are not here at the appointed hour, Cousin Ed.," said Fannie, laughingly, to Mr. Lewis, as he was leaving the front door, accompanied by the minister and Mr. Ray, who had both become frequent visitors at Mount Airy. Turning, he replied :

"And what will you wager, Fannie ? the prize must be something worthy the effort to get here at the precise moment."

"If you come in time, I'll promise to speak telling words for you to the fair one."

"And I will, too, Mr. Lewis," said Lydia, bursting into a merry laugh.

"Agreed ;" and he touched his hat gallantly to the young ladies.

The minister and Mr. Ray cast significant glances at each other, and inquiring ones at their companion ; but he, with the most perfect *sang froid*, took an arm of each of the gentlemen, and, resuming the conversation which Fannie's remark had interrupted, walked on.

The young ladies were awake very early. Indeed, Lydia had slept but little during the night. Thoughts of getting back to her old home, to the midst of those

who had known and loved her from childhood, and of assembling with them once more in the quiet church to listen to the words of heavenly wisdom from her dear old Father Miller, had driven sleep far from her, and the morning dawn, as it stole on its gray wings over the earth, found her busy with these thoughts.

Dick hastened to the stable early, to rub down "Ginger," one of his "boys," whose names, because of their oddity and inappropriateness, called up a laugh whenever they were mentioned. They were a pair of fine bays; and why one of them should be named Blackberry, and the other, and that, too, the gentlest of all living horses, should have been dubbed "Ginger," nobody could tell. Dick always laughed when he was asked about it, and evaded rendering the reason by saying, "for his part, he thought they was mighty good names." Further than this, no one could pry into the reasons, which all supposed he had, from his invariably showing his teeth in a broad grin, whenever the question was put to him.

The cook was busy in the kitchen, the house-girls in the dining room; and Aunt Peggy, bestirring herself earlier than usual, found her way to Fannie's room to assist the young ladies in their preparation, and to deliver her message for Miss Annie.

"Give a mighty heap of love to Miss Annie for me, Miss Liddy, and tell her Aunt Peggy says the good work is going on, bless de Lord. Mas'r Ed. is 'most a Baptist, and Miss Fannie too; and I don't doubts but what all of 'em, 'cept old Mas'r and Mr. Gordon, will soon come on in the good old way, bless de Lord." And the old lady looked inquiringly at Fannie, to see if she approved of the message.

"Why, Aunt Peggy, you are too hopeful, I declare ! You don't think that I am a Baptist, or that mother will ever join your church ?"

"I hopes all things, Fannie dear, bless de Lord. My Mas'r will bring all things 'bout in his own good time ; and I would n't be 'tall supprised if dese old eyes sees wonderful sights yet, 'fore I die. Anyhow, I'll continer to pray night and day dat all may be led in de right way, bless de Lord."

"And you don't think father and Mr. Gordon will turn Baptists, Aunt Peggy ?" asked Fannie, with an earnestness which Lydia could but notice.

"Can't say, Fannie dear ; don't know dat dey will, ole mas'r's-mighty full of prejudices, and preachers thinks it don't look well in dem to turn, you know."

"Why, Fannie, I really believe you would be glad if they would join our church ! You are right, Aunt Peggy, Fannie is a Baptist at heart, and I hope she will have courage enough to come out and acknowledge it."

"Tell me, child, is dis so ?" and the old Christian servant caught the half-dressed girl in her arms. "Is it true what Miss Liddy says ? are you a Baptist now, and would you be willing to go under de water ? I've prayed to see dis day, but I did not know it was so near, bless de Lord."

"Oh, I don't know, Aunt Peggy, I can't tell what I would do ; I believe I am almost convinced ; but my father's opposition, how could I ever overcome that ? No, no, I can never be any thing but what I am : it's wrong for me to think of such a thing."

"Why, my child, has you forgot what de Bible says about dis very thing : ' He dat loveth father and mother

more dan me is not worthy of me,' and 'member, child, our blessed Saviour says, 'If ye know dese things, happy is ye if ye do em.' I long to see de day when you will put on Christ in baptism, and I feels like dat day is not a great way off, bless de Lord."

"You must not expect too much, Aunt Peggy. I can not incur my father's displeasure," replied the young girl, as she turned upon the old servant a mingled look of sadness and entreaty.

"Don't talk to me dis way, child. I'se commanded to hope all things, and I'se going to do it, bless de Lord."

Before the young ladies were ready to come down, the gentlemen were at the door.

"So you have won our services, Mr. Lewis," said Lydia to him, as she met him in the hall.

"Yes, Miss Clarke, and I shall expect you and Cousin Fan to acquit yourselves most nobly in pleading my cause."

"We will do our best to win you favor in the sight of your lady love," she replied, laughingly.

Breakfast was ready, and Mr. Gordon had not yet come. As he had not promised positively to go, because of the difficulty of returning before the Sabbath, it was decided not to wait any longer for him.

They were just ready to leave the door when this gentleman was seen hastening up the avenue.

"Just in time, Mr. Gordon," said Mr. Lewis to him, as he reached the side of the buggy, "we feared that you were not coming; a few minutes more and we should have left you; there, take a seat with Fannie and Mr. Ray, and we will be off."

"I am sorry to say that I can not accompany you," replied the minister as he threw open his cloak, after his hurried, exciting walk ; "a circumstance has occurred since I last saw you that entirely precludes my going."

As he spoke, Fannie was observed by Mr. Ray to draw her vail over her face ; but he supposed it was to shut out the cold air, and so took no further notice of it. The minister made no disclosure as to the nature of the occurrence, and no one questioned him respecting it.

There was one of the company, beside himself, that fully understood it, but she betrayed not the slightest indication of her knowledge of the fact, and there was one who guessed it all, but he forbore any comments. He knew the present was not the time to betray his suspicions, so he rested content with the determination to confirm them at the earliest opportunity. The remainder of the company rested in entire ignorance of the minister's misfortune.

Mr. Holmes, whose curiosity was aroused, remarked, by way of drawing the secret from his pastor, "Well, Brother Gordon, I wanted you to go along to take care of these young people—I mean Fannie and Nick ; Ed. is old enough to take care of himself and Lydia ; but the fact of the business is, these young people are so thoughtless, I am almost afraid to see them start."

"Give yourself no uneasiness, my dear sir ; I promise to return Miss Fannie to your hands in safety," said Mr. Ray, flourishing his whip most vigorously about Ginger's ears, whose undisturbed equanimity under the treatment might have assured his master that, so far

as he was concerned, there was not the slightest cause for apprehension.

"We do not doubt your skill and care, Mr. Ray," said Mrs. Holmes, "but I had wished Brother Gordon to go for the pleasure of the trip ; I know it would have done you good, Brother Gordon ; you need relaxation from your studies."

The minister cast a meaning look at Fannie, as she raised her vail to bid them a second farewell. The color rushed to her cheek, and the tears to her eyes ; but in the hurry of leaving they were unobserved by all but him.

The day was a most delightful one, just cool enough to make fall wrapping necessary ; and our party had a most charming ride. It was agreed that they should halt to dine at the spring which had furnished the bridal company with refreshing water, in their journey to Weston. This was Mr. Lewis's proposition, to which they all readily acceded.

"It was here on this old log we spread our dinner," said Mr. Lewis, as at noon the party reached the trunk of a large sugar-tree that had been uprooted by the storm, and round the dead roots of which the ground ivy had fastened itself ; "and there is the spring from which Miss Annie brought cool water to refresh us weary travelers."

"Give me the glass, Cousin Ed.," said Fannie, tossing aside her shawl, and throwing back her straw flat, "and I will take Annie's place, I mean as far as I can ;" and she cast a mischievous glance at her cousin, which was entirely lost upon Mr. Ray, only as it served to heighten her beauty, but which Lydia fully understood. Mr. Ray

offered to accompany her, but she declined his escort. "I am playing Hebe to-day, and who ever heard of her having a young gentleman to assist her in her duties. You and Lydia spread the dinner, and you shall soon have 'crystal water from the flowing spring,' " and gathering up the pitcher and goblet, she tripped off in the direction of the old oak, to find the spring.

Our party, having partaken of a hasty meal, resumed their journey. The road was rough, and Ginger, not to be moved from the gait he had chosen, by the whip, nor even by coaxing, moved on so leisurely that Mr. Lewis and Lydia, who were acquainted with the way, and distance, felt dubious about getting to their destination before nightfall. After miles of untiring energy on the part of Mr. Ray, to get the most uncompromising of all horses to mend his gait, they reached Forest Glen just as the sun was departing from the horizon. They found the family awaiting their arrival ; and that greatest of all country-life comforts, a bright wood fire blazing on the parlor hearth. Mr. and Mrs. Gray, and the children, from Annie down to "baby," holding on to her mother's apron, were on the porch to welcome them.

"We are glad to see you back in our midst, Lydia," said Mrs. Gray, as she pressed her to her bosom.

"And most happy to welcome to our roof our new friends," added Mr. Gray, as he led the way to the parlor.

It was a cheerful, pleasant meeting, as of friend with friend. Reserve was banished, and the etiquette of kindness ruled the hour. The little children came to see Miss Fannie, that Sister Annie had told them so much about, and to ask Miss Lydia about Janey and

Jimmy, who had been their playmates ever since they could remember any thing. Mr. Gray, leaving Tom to entertain the young gentlemen, went to look after the horses. As soon as the young ladies were comfortably warm, Annie led them to the dressing-room to take off their bonnets and wrappings.

"And you received my letter, Annie?" asked Lydia, as they passed to the room; "we were afraid you would not get it before we came; we had intended to defer our visit until next week, but Mr. Lewis insisted that we should come to-day. His professed reason was to get acquainted with Father Miller, and hear him preach; you know next Saturday is our church meeting, and not having attended a meeting of this kind since he was a little boy, he wished to be present; but Fannie and I believe he had a still stronger reason for coming so soon, that he did not choose to give."

"Yes, I received your letter early this morning; the boy that went to market brought it while we were at breakfast, and it filled me so with joy that I have scarcely known what I have been about ever since. But what were Mr. Lewis's reasons?" she asked, as she saw the eyes of the two young ladies rest upon her after the exchange of a very meaning smile. Her manner assumed the most perfect composure in the world, as she added, "If you are not masonically bound, my dear girls, to keep the secret, I should be very glad to be informed."

"We must leave you to guess, Annie; Cousin Ed. would never forgive us for telling tales out of school."

"But you have excited my curiosity, Fannie, and must tell me."

"No, no; we must leave it to him. I have no doubt

that he will whisper it in your ear before he returns to Weston ;" and Fannie looked so archly at her that Annie could not help blushing despite her imperturbability.

"How provoking you are, girls, to excite my desire in this way, and then leave me on the torture-wheel of suspense. This is not obeying the golden rule, and I shall have to inform Father Miller against you, Lydia ; you have forgotten the old gentleman's instructions. But, never mind, if it is any thing I ought to know, I will tell Mr. Lewis of your cruelty, and ask him for a solution of the mystery."

"He will tell you without being asked, in my opinion, if you will but give him an opportunity ;" and Fannie laughed outright at Annie's most unsuccessful endeavor to look innocent of her meaning.

"Tell me," said Annie, anxious to change the conversation, which was becoming rather too pointed to be agreeable, "has Mr. Lewis become convinced on the baptismal question ? Father Miller told me that Cousin Grace had sent to him for a list of the best works on the subject, and she said in her last letter that he was applying himself most assiduously to its investigation."

"I can not answer your question definitely. I know he is studying it day and night, and he and father often have disputes, in which he always carries his point ; and I also understand that he and Mr. Gordon meet frequently to discuss the question, but I do not think he is yet fully decided. Should he become convinced that the Baptists are right, I shall fear for pa and Mr. Gordon ; they will find it difficult to withstand his arguments."

"I suppose your father and Grace have agreed to

reconcile their differences. Has she ever communed with the Presbyterians? She has said nothing to us about her feelings since the conversation she had with the ministers. I remember your father said 'he would have no close communion people about him,' and we thought that perhaps she had agreed to waive her objection for the sake of his feelings; and yet we scarcely dared to entertain such a thought, knowing how unyielding she has always been in matters of conscience."

"No, she has never communed with our church," and Fannie hesitated; she knew not how to proceed with her reply. "Had Annie," she asked herself, "heard nothing of the last difficulty? her words certainly betrayed no knowledge of it." At length she added, "I believe they have agreed to let the subject remain silent between them. Father has found he can not convince her, and make her an open communionist, and he has concluded to leave her to her own opinions."

Her manner betrayed an evident embarrassment which did not escape the quick eye of Annie, but as she seemed to avoid speaking on the subject, her friend felt that it would be rude to urge a further disclosure.

After a moment's pause, she resumed in a more sprightly tone, "Father is very sorry that Cousin Ed. has such a Baptist tendency. He has always hoped that he would be a Presbyterian, but I believe he despairs of that now, and has concluded he will be a Baptist if any thing."

"God grant he may," mentally exclaimed Annie; but no sound escaped her lips.

Mrs. Gray entered the room at this moment to see if the young ladies had completed their toilet. She found

them very nearly ready, and leaving her daughter to show them down, she went to attend to having supper prepared.

When the young ladies reached the parlor, they found Mr. and Mrs. Gray, the young gentlemen and Tom, chatting away very socially. Mr. Gray was the life of the company. He was a genuine Kentucky farmer, frank, hospitable, kind, and well-informed. His house was the resort of the friendless poor, and from his door none ever turned away empty. His possessions were not large ; but though he gave liberally, his stores never decreased. He had read that "he that giveth to the poor, lendeth to the Lord," and he believed and practiced what he had read. He was willing to take the promised security, and he found that it never failed him. His kindness and uniform good humor, joined with his most excellent judgment, and every-day practical religion, won for him the love and respect of all, and made him an agreeable companion to those who sought his acquaintance. He gave without boasting, and conferred favors without bringing upon the recipient the feeling of endless obligation. He knew that he was but a steward for his Master, and that after he had done all he could, he was still but an unprofitable servant.

Mrs. Gray was a kind-hearted, energetic woman, and a model housekeeper. Looking well to the success of her household, and every thing from garret—yes, garret, for theirs was an old-fashioned country-house, which boasted of a garret, not an attic—to cellar, bore indisputable marks of neatness and good order ; not that strait-laced primness which impresses even the most fastidious with a feeling of uncomfortableness and fear.

What a pity it is that some housekeepers will torment themselves to death to make every body and every thing about them unpleasant ! Always brushing, dusting, polishing, and hopelessly miserable whenever a truant scrap from a neighbor's scissors finds its way to the carpet, until it is picked up and unmistakably committed to the flames.

The children of such a household are filled with old-maidish ways before they reach their teens ; prim, spiritless creatures, destitute of all naturalness, and fit only to talk about " order and proprieties." I pity the mother of such *walking systems* ; my heart aches for the children of such proper mothers. Rather let me have the ringing laugh and bounding feet, though that laugh may reach a note above the octave of propriety, and the bounding feet bring home soiled stockings and untidy shoes. For mercy's sake, let children be children as long as they will. Then shall we see more men and women, and fewer young ladies of fashion, and dandies of the first water ; more heart and sense, and less puling sentimentality, and aping the would-be-great ; then would there be a pure health current of common sense, morality, and religion, running through the whole frame-work of society, giving to it vigorous life and progress.

Mr. Gray and Mr. Lewis engaged in conversation about the political aspect of the country, the crop in general, advance in agriculture and manufactures, improvements in stock, and the effects of the recent importations from Europe, etc., etc. Mr. Lewis found the farmer intelligent and agreeable, possessing a fund of information and thought. The young ladies had many

things to say to each other *sub rosa*; so they withdrew to one corner of the room, apart from the gentlemen, who, on this occasion, had gallantry enough to leave them to themselves.

"Get down from Miss Lydia's lap, Mollie," said Mrs. Gray, entering the room to have a few minutes' conversation before tea. "She is weary after her long rough ride; when she gets rested you may sit with her."

"Me love Liddy, mamma," said the little creature, throwing her arms around the young lady's neck, and putting up her ready and pouting lips for a kiss, "and Rachel says she comes from Cousin Gracey's house, and me wants to see Cousin Gracey, don't you, mamma?"

Then followed from Mrs. Gray many inquiries respecting the health and prosperity of her favorite niece.

"I suppose she has not changed her religious views, Miss Fannie? She has been strangely silent with regard to this point ever since that conversation with the Presbyterian minister. We have wondered at it, but we concluded, and yet scarcely knew how to do so, that perhaps she had yielded her old opinions. In a few days after Annie came home, she wrote to Brother Miller for a catalogue of books on baptism for Mr. Lewis, saying, that he wished to study the subject thoroughly, and we have heard nothing from her about the matter since. We have felt some solicitude about it, I assure you."

Fannie scarcely knew how to answer. She was convinced, from Mrs. Gray's words, that Grace had kept the knowledge of the difficulty between her husband and his father from her friends, and she did not wish to disclose it. Lydia, observing her embarrassment, replied :

"O, no, Mrs. Gray, I assure you she is just as steadfast in her principles as when you knew her, and I believe Mr. Holmes has concluded it is of no avail to endeavor to win her away from her position ; so they have compromised the matter by agreeing to say nothing about it."

"The preacher did not convince her then ?"

"O, no, she and old Aunt Peggy proved more than a match for both of the preachers. From what Fannie here has told me, I did not know but that Mr. Gordon would be forced to yield his position. She says Grace's victory was most triumphant."

Mrs. Gray and her daughter looked at Fannie somewhat surprised.

"Well, I do believe old Aunt Peggy's words are true. What do you think, mother ! Aunt Peggy sent me word by Fannie, that the good work was going on ; that Mr. Lewis was almost a Baptist, and Fannie too. Would n't it be glorious if cousin should convince them of their error, and they should all turn Baptists—Mr. Gordon and old Mr. Holmes too ?"

"Come, Annie, you are too sanguine," said Mrs. Gray, rather reprovably ; for she feared Fannie's feelings might be touched ; "Grace has no desire to perform such a mighty work."

At this moment Mr. Gray appealed to his wife for some information regarding his wheat crop—the number of bushels a certain field had produced ; and Annie left the room to see to supper. As soon as Mrs. Gray was seated by her husband, Fannie turned to Lydia, and asked in a tone of anxious inquiry :

"Do you think it is possible they do not know what has occurred?"

"Yes it is so ; Grace has not written a word about it, and she enjoined it upon me not to intimate it to her friends. She knows it would only grieve their hearts without effecting any good.

Supper was served up in real Kentucky style ; smoking tea and coffee, savory meats well peppered, and biscuit and waffles piping hot, with an ample supply of preserves, cakes, and ice-cream. Mrs. Gray presided with that air of genteel hospitality, which, while it removes all restraint and promotes the most perfect sociability, as fully precludes all demonstration of rudeness and ill-breeding. Mr. Gray paid that attention to his guests that furnished them with the proper thing just at the proper time, thereby preventing awkwardness, and that degree of over-kindness which renders the guest either guilty of the rudeness of repeatedly refusing, or forces him just for politeness, to eat food his judgment condemns.

After supper it was proposed to make arrangements for the morrow ; and after some discussion, in which all joined, one proposing one plan, and another another, they decided to appoint Mr. Gray "Committee of Arrangements."

"There must be no demurring from my plan ; is that fully understood?"

"Certainly, certainly," was answered by all in one voice.

"Well, then, I will read the programme in a few words. The ladies, of course, must be disposed of first, this is gallantry you know, young gentlemen. The

young ladies must remain at home with Mrs. Gray through the morning to get thoroughly rested."

"O, we are not the least tired, Mr. Gray."

"Come, Lydia, have you forgotten your pledge?—no opposition!"

She placed her finger on her lip significantly.

"After dinner they must ride over to see Cousin Eliza Truman. The young gentlemen—I mean Mr. Ray and Thomas—must accompany them. Mr. Lewis and I will make Father Miller a visit in the morning, and if we return in time we will join your party."

"But, father, you have given Mr. Ray and me nothing to do until after dinner. You don't intend we shall act *young lady* too, do you?"

"You may take the gun and go out on the farm; act overseer in my stead, and kill a squirrel or two for old Mrs. James."

The evening was spent most agreeably; it was more like the meeting of long estranged friends, than the first interview of persons who had never before met. The little ones beginning to manifest sleepiness, a chapter was read and a hymn sung, in which the children joined; then followed a prayer, earnest, appropriate; not one under whose long-drawn length the children fell asleep and the grown-up people yawned, and heartily wished for the Amen. Thanks were returned to God for the daily bread, and for all the comforts of life which his kind hand had furnished. His guidance and support for the future were humbly, trustingly sought, and a fervent petition went up that "his kingdom might come, and his will be done on earth as it is in heaven."

Very soon after breakfast, the next morning, the horses were brought out, and Mr. Gray and Mr. Lewis mounted for their ride.

"We will go early, Mr. Lewis, or we may not find the old gentleman at home. He spends much of his time in visiting the people of his congregation ; when he was a young man he gave a good deal of time and attention to his little farm ; but his children are all married and settled now but his youngest son, George, who is in college. He is a very excellent young man, and one of promise ; and his father desires to give him every advantage he can for cultivating his talents. His intention is to preach, and we look forward for him to take the dear old man's place when his labors on earth are done."

"Has he no one at home with him ?"

"Nobody but his wife and two servants, a woman who does the housework, and a man who cultivates his little farm."

As they rode up to the stile they saw the old gentleman coming in from the garden, where he had been showing Ned how to bury his Irish potatoes ; for Ned, like all other specimens of his race, needed the same instruction every year ; he had so many other things to do he couldn't remember little matters.

As soon as Father Miller recognized Mr. Gray, he directed his steps toward the little front gate, through which the gentlemen were just entering.

"Glad to see you, Brother Gray," said the old gentleman, giving him a hearty shake of the hand. Mr. Lewis was then introduced and welcomed with a kindly greeting.

"Is this the Mr. Lewis whom Mrs. Holmes has intro-

duced to me as the young gentleman who desired to be informed on the subject of baptism ?”

“The same, Mr. Miller ;” replied Mr. Lewis, “and I have come this morning to see you, and to request you, if you please, to preach on the subject next Sabbath morning.”

“Walk in, gentlemen,” said the old man, leading the way ; “I must take you to my wife’s room, where we shall have a little fire to sit by.”

The old lady rose from her seat in the corner, and laying her knitting on the stand at her right, where rested her Bible, stepped forward to meet them. Her manner and dress showed the meek, pure-minded Christian. She was a Virginian by birth and education ; and though she was old and feeble from suffering, she did not consider this a reason why she should forego the courtesies and amenities of life. Mr. Lewis was charmed by her plain, gentle manner, and the neatness and taste exhibited in her dress. He believed that dress is, to some extent, an index of the mind and heart, and to him the dark calico wrapper, with its plain, straight sleeves, the unsullied check apron, tied behind, after the ancient style, the three-cornered neck-handkerchief, white as the untracked snow, and the plain Swiss-muslin cap, with its strings of the same material, so tidily bowed beneath the chin, and its evenly crimped frill—all bespoke the purity of the mind within ; while the benevolent expression of the face, though seamed and wrinkled, and the gentle manner and kind voice told that the heart was the dwelling-place of the Spirit of Peace. A good wood-fire threw its cheerful light over the well-polished, old-fashioned furniture, and the cat purred cosily in the corner. It had always been Father

Miller's custom to have fire in the morning and at night, let the thermometer stand as many degrees above ninety-six as it might, "to drive away," as he said, "the foul air and superabundant moisture."

"Wife, this is our friend, Mr. Lewis, for whom our Grace wrote for that list of books."

The old lady brought down her spectacles, which she had raised upon their entrance, to get a better view of the young gentleman.

"I am very glad to see you, Mr. Lewis, take a seat, sir; will you, Brother Gray, have this chair? Mr. Miller told me of you, and I am pleased to know that you are seeking the right way. We must all know our duty before we can do it, Mr. Lewis; and I assure you that we have felt a great interest in you ever since we read Grace's letter, and heard Annie Gray speak of you. You know, Mr. Miller, Annie told us about Mr. Lewis, as soon as she came home."

He would gladly have asked what she had said to recommend him to their favor, but her father was present and he dared not inquire. Without betraying any embarrassment, he remarked that he thought it was a point upon which every one should be fully satisfied, and ready to give a reason for his opinions.

"I rested very contentedly in the thought, Mr. Miller, that the mode was of no great importance, so the heart was right, until I listened to the conversation between Mrs. Holmes and the preachers; but I became fully satisfied then that the mode was not a mere matter of fancy or convenience, left to the whim or caprice of the candidate, but that Christ has instituted baptism as a symbol of his burial and resurrection; and has also, in

his own person, given us an example of the manner of its performance, which it behooves every Christian to ascertain and follow ; and from the discussion I was led to think there was but one baptism, and immersion was that one ; I have found the Bible bearing me out in this opinion ; also that history, and the testimony of the fathers, even of Presbyterian divines themselves, go to prove that immersion was the ancient practice of the churches, and was set aside by human authority."

"I am glad you have investigated the subject so thoroughly, Mr. Lewis. We ought to inform ourselves about this matter, and not depend upon the say-so and example of others."

"So I think, Mrs. Miller, and I have come this morning, ma'am, to talk with Mr. Miller about baptism, and to request him to preach on the subject next Sabbath."

"It will be a very suitable theme, sir, for it is our communion ; and as our close communion is nothing more nor less than close baptism, it will be a very fitting occasion for such a discourse."

"Yes, Brother Miller, give us the sermon you preached after your debate with that testy little Presbyterian. I think that will decide any doubts Mr. Lewis may still entertain."

"I can scarcely be said to entertain any doubts respecting the example of the Saviour, and the ancient mode, as practiced by the apostles and their immediate successors. It is true, there are some instances in the Bible, which, taking them as they stand, unconnected with the example of Christ and the design of baptism, leave us entirely in the dark with respect to the mode. The Philippian jailor and his household, and Lydia and her

household. If we were left to determine what baptism is from these two cases, there might be as many modes as there are candidates."

"True, Mr. Lewis, were these our only guide, we should indeed be left in hopeless darkness. But our Saviour did not, in the least particular, leave his work incomplète. He commands us to be baptized. He has given us an example to follow, and in language so plain, it seems to me that no unbiased mind can mistake it. The examples given where the mode is introduced, the passages containing an express allusion to baptism, as Romans, xi. 3, 4, Colossians, xi. 12, baptism illustrated by events in the Old Testament, 1 Corinthians x., 1 Peter, ii. 20, all go to prove unmistakably that baptism is the immersion of the candidate in water."

"I agree with you, sir, that the radical idea of the term, baptize, the express design of the ordinance, the example of Christ, the apostolic practice, as we gather it from the Bible, and from history, the present practice of more than one-half of the Christian world embracing the Greek churches, all go to show conclusively the validity of immersion. I have closely examined the testimony of Dr. Wall, Archbishop Tillotson, Archbishop Secker, Dr. Samuel Clarke, Drs. Wells, Doddridge, Whitby, and Macknight, all of whom bear the most indisputable testimony in favor of immersion."

"I find, Mr. Lewis, that you and Brother Miller entertain the same view with regard to the validness of our practice; and if you admit that man has no right to change the institution of Christ, there is no difference between you."

"I admit your premise, sir, and believe man has no

right to add a jot to, or subtract a tittle from, the teachings of the Scriptures."

"There will be no need of Mr. Miller's preaching on baptism, then, I think, Mr. Lewis," said the old lady, looking at him attentively; "you are just as thorough a Baptist in sentiment as I would ever wish to see, and I hope it will not be long before you are led to put on Christ by public profession of his name."

Mrs. Miller was a true and fearless Christian, and she never suffered an opportunity to speak a word of admonition and consolation to pass unimproved. "She sowed in the morning, and in the evening she withheld not her hand."

"As it regards myself, Mrs. Miller, I would have no need of further light upon the subject, for I am clearly convinced that immersion alone is baptism; but it behooves me to fortify myself to the utmost extent in my position, that I may be ready to meet the objections and cavils of opposers. I live in the midst of Presbyterians, the most uncompromising the world ever saw, I suppose, and Mrs. Holmes is the only Baptist in my town. I believe there are a few families in the county; but all, with the exception of Mr. Clarke's, are pretty much unknown in the community; so that we may say Baptist principles and usages are below par in Weston. You see I have engaged in a warfare with the odds greatly against me."

"O, no, Mr. Lewis, do ~~not~~ say so, sir! You have truth on your side, and you know it is mighty and must prevail! 'If God be for us, who can be against us?' You must fight if you expect to conquer, or the enemy,

seeing your weakness, will declare victory before the battle is won."

Mrs. Miller's words brought to mind Aunt Peggy, as she triumphantly exclaimed, on leaving the room, after the memorable discussion, "truth is mighty, and must prevail."

"In saying that Cousin Grace is the only Baptist in our town, I do great injustice to one of the most zealous advocates of immersion I have ever seen—an old servant woman of my uncle Holmes, who would at any time, I believe, become a martyr for her faith. She is very well informed upon the subject, and if they would confine themselves to the Bible, I believe she could overturn all the arguments of my uncle, and Mr. Gordon, the pastor."

"And there is another reason why I desire Mr. Miller to preach on baptism," added Mr. Lewis, after a moment. "I have a cousin visiting with me, who is a member of the Presbyterian church, but who is more than half a Baptist in sentiment, and I wish the sermon preached for her benefit as much as for my own. I hope, Mr. Miller, you will take up all the Pedit-baptist objections and dispose of them. I am very anxious that she shall be fully qualified to meet her father with argument, for it is only in this way that she can hope to influence him at all. I fear she will have a severe struggle before she can come out and openly espouse the Baptist cause."

"And do you think this is her desire, Mr. Lewis?"

"I believe it will result in this, Mr. Miller, if she can ever gather up determination enough to declare her sentiments without fear of her father's opposition."

After spending an hour or two in very agreeable and edifying conversation, the gentlemen rose to leave.

"I would be glad you would stay to dinner, Brother Gray, you and Mr. Lewis. We will give you a hearty welcome to a plain meal."

"We would do so, but we have promised the young ladies to go with them this afternoon, to see Mr. and Mrs. Truman."

"You will call again, Mr. Lewis, before leaving the neighborhood?"

"I shall be most happy to do so, sir."

The gentlemen bade the aged pair good-morning, and took their leave.

CHAPTER X.

THE VISIT TO MRS. TRUMAN—THE WALK.

“RUN to the door, Maria dear, and see if Mr. Lewis and your father are coming. Our dinner has been ready some time, and I guess the young ladies have an appetite by this late hour, and if the gentlemen do not come very soon we shall be forced to dine without them. It is very probable they have remained with Father Miller ; he is so hospitable that he will make them stay if possible to partake of his wholesome fare.”

“Yes, mamma, I do believe they are coming,” said the little girl, running into the room, while her flushed features and animated manner told how happy she felt in the success of her errand. “I do believe it is them ; I saw two men riding up to the front gate, and one looks just like father on Dilcey.”

“I wonder how long Mr. Ray and Tom will stay ; they have certainly had fine success in their gaming this morning, or I am sure they would have been back before this late hour.”

“The young gentlemen have returned, mother,” said Annie entering the parlor where Mrs. Gray had been entertaining Lydia and Fannie with tales of her girlhood, in which they were deeply interested. “And Maria tells me that father and Mr. Lewis are at the stile, so I

shall have dinner as soon as possible, I suppose, for I am sure you must all feel by this time, inclined to partake of 'creature comforts.'"

Mrs. Gray, as we have before said, was a model woman and housekeeper ; and one of her chief excellences was, the very sensible manner in which she brought up her children, teaching them from their earliest years a degree of dependence upon themselves, which developed and matured their judgment, and which not only suppressed selfishness, but called into active exercise the best and noblest feelings of their nature. Annie was initiated into the mysteries of housekeeping and culinary matters at quite an early age, and for some years had been competent to share these responsibilities with her mother.

"And how were you pleased with Father Miller, Mr. Lewis?" asked Mrs. Gray as they assembled at the dinner-table.

"Delighted with him, Mrs. Gray, I assure you ; I found him a man of most excellent sense, with a heart overflowing with kindness, and a mind well filled with useful knowledge. His plain, unostentatious manner and venerable appearance brought to mind the patriarchs of old. We spent the hour most agreeably with him and his wife, who seems to be indeed a help-meet to him."

"Yes, she is such truly, and he has always relied upon her judgment and discretion in the management of his little farm. He has always said 'Betsy was superior to him here.' When he has been absent from home attending district associations or holding meetings of days with some neighboring church, she has remained at home, seeing that the corn was planted, or

the harvest gathered, or that the hogs in the pen had plenty of corn and water. And when he has been at home she has, in a great degree, relieved him of the supervision of his farming arrangements, thereby giving him a great deal of time for study. She often says that 'in business she has been both the man and woman, and that there is but one class of people living that has a harder time than Baptist preachers, and that is their wives.' And then she would add, for fear I should think she was complaining of her lot, 'but you know, Brother Gray, it is all for the Master's cause, and if we women can't preach, we can stay at home and take care of things while our husbands go forth to sow the seed of truth and righteousness.' She is indeed a most excellent woman, Mr. Lewis, loved and respected by all that know her; and old and young always speak of the venerable pair as 'Father and Mother Miller.'"

"How beautiful it is to see those who go in and out before the people giving the example of a meek and lowly spirit. It does more to recommend the religion of the Cross than volumes of written sermons."

"Very true, Mr. Lewis, for 'by their fruits ye shall know them,' and when we see the followers of him 'who had not where to lay his head' bearing all the trials and afflictions of life patiently and cheerfully, that they may 'occupy until he come,' men are *forced* to *acknowledge* the truth of religion, and to respect those who embody its glorious teachings in their daily walk and conversation. It is not those, Mr. Lewis, who make the loudest pretensions to religion who are most governed by its precepts, or feel most deeply its power in their own souls. There are Pharisees now, as in the

days of our Saviour, who 'thank God they are not as the poor publicans ; who make broad their phylacteries, and enlarge the borders of their garments, and love the chief seats in the synagogues ;' and such persons do more to bring disgrace upon the cause they profess than all things else beside. They are the ones who, by continuance in well-doing, 'run with patience the race set before them,' that recommend religion with power and success."

" So I have always felt, Mr. Gray ; and I have had many a lesson of practical piety taught me by an old servant man my mother owned when I was a boy ; who, under all circumstances, even the most trying, always thanked God, and that in sincerity, ' that it was as well with him as it was.'

" ' They also serve who stand and wait. ' "

After dinner, the young ladies and gentlemen, with Mr. Gray, who was always delighted with the society of sensible young people, rode over to see Mr. Truman's family. Mr. Lewis escorted Annie ; Tom, who was most wonderfully pleased with " Miss Fannie," rode with her ; and Mr. Ray, mounted on Mr. Gray's fine sorrel, gallanted Lydia, who was carried along most charmingly on little Maria's pony. The evening was beautiful and pleasant, and as our party were in good spirits, they enjoyed their ride exceedingly.

" How vividly this visit brings back to mind the bridal morning," said Mr. Lewis to Annie, as they reached an elevation in the road which commanded the view of Mr. Truman's residence. "'Twas just here Cousin Grace turned back to look, for the last time, on the home she was leaving forever."

"That was a trying moment to her, Mr. Lewis," replied Annie, in a soft, low voice. She had been very gay during the ride, and Mr. Lewis felt his emotions deepen as her subdued tones met his ear. "Grace was such a favorite with her family, that it was almost like breaking their hearts to give her up ; and as her attachment to them was equally strong, it was like severing the cords of her being to turn away from their loving hearts and seek a home among strangers."

"She has won many a stranger heart to her in her new home—hearts whose strongest love and tenderest sympathies she will ever have. She is a woman who calls forth the purest and noblest feelings of the soul ; and one who will always find friends wherever her lot may be cast."

"Yes, she is a true woman, full of love and trust ; and I have often thought had she married a missionary, she would have been an Ann Hasseltine Judson, she has so much fortitude and such faith."

As the last sentence was concluded, the party reached the front-stile. The girls observing the soberness of Annie's usually radiant face, gave her most significant smiles. She shook her head in refutation of their well-understood implication, but they were not to be convinced, and as they passed up the pavement Lydia whispered in her ear, "Did Mr. Lewis divulge the great secret, Annie ? You look very sober."

"No, indeed ; he has kept all of his mysterious knowledge to himself."

"Come, come, Annie, speak honestly ; has he not told you some unexpected news ?"

"No, Lydia ; I assure you he has not ; we were

talking about Grace, her marrying, and leaving home."

"Take care, Annie, that you do not do the same thing before the fall is past: 'coming events cast their shadows before.'"

"Avaunt, you shall not be the wizard, Lydia, to sound in my ears 'beware of the day.'"

They reached the door as Annie pronounced the last words, and the conversation was discontinued; but Lydia's words, light though they were, had called up in Annie's mind a train of thought which gave to her a sadder expression than usually characterized her face; and which, in spite of her efforts, was observed by Mrs. Truman, who asked her "if she did not feel well this evening?" The more she endeavored to rally, the more signally she failed, until at last, wearied and confused by her vain attempts, she stole quietly from the parlor, while the others of the company were engaged in an animated conversation, and walked into the yard.

Lydia, who sat near the front window, observed her as she passed from one clump of shrubbery to another; and her manner, so abstracted, joined to her appearance, as Mr. Lewis handed her from her saddle, was "confirmation strong as words of Holy Writ" to the fugitive suspicions that had been flitting through her mind.

Fannie found Mrs. Truman a very pleasant woman, and she loved her because she was so like her daughter in features and manner. She felt somewhat at a loss to answer some of her questions for fear she should betray what Grace had so strictly enjoined should not be mentioned, and unless Mrs. Truman addressed herself particularly to her, she left Lydia to reply. Mr. Tru-

man was not at home, which Mr. Lewis very much regretted.

"I fear he will not be back in time for you to see him, Mr. Lewis," Mrs. Truman replied to his remark, "unless we can prevail upon the young ladies to doff their bonnets and take tea with me. It was late before he left home, and as he has some business to attend to, he will probably not return before nightfall ; but the moon gives a beautiful light now, and as the air is pleasant, I think the young ladies will run no risk in riding after supper."

"I can not let them stay this evening, Sister Truman ; my wife's last command was to bring them home to supper, and you know I dare not disobey commands," said Mr. Gray, laughing. "My wife has adopted Miss Lucy Stone's new version, 'husbands, obey your wives, or look out for consequences ;' so you see, to save myself from the penalty of the law, I am forced to decline your kind invitation."

"But I will promise to meet all the consequences of your transgression if the young ladies will stay."

"We will leave the matter with Miss Annie," answered Fannie, to whom Mrs. Truman had turned for a decision ; "I have no doubt that she can settle this mooted point. Here she is, let her act as arbiter in this case."

"What is that I am to do ?" asked Annie, as she caught Fannie's words ; "I hope it is no serious task you wish to impose upon me, for really, I assure you, I am incompetent to any thing of the kind this evening."

"Nothing momentous, Annie ; I was insisting that you should remain and take tea with me. Your father

objects, and Miss Holmes proposes to leave it to your decision ; I hope you will prove more compromising than Brother Gray."

"How shall I adjust this great dispute?" said Annie, assuming a countenance half grave, half mischievous ; "really, really, I am not adequate to the work ; how shall I extricate myself from this dilemma?"

"By showing yourself the obedient daughter, Annie, as I will the husband ; remember your mother's last injunction."

"True, true, aunt ; mother's last words were, 'bring the young ladies and gentlemen back to tea.' I will throw the settling of this question upon her, and as father has wisely advised, prove the obedient daughter ; and, young ladies, as it is growing late, we will bid aunt good evening and ride."

The young ladies and gentlemen obeyed her command, promising to dine with Mrs. Truman the following week.

They found Mrs. Gray awaiting them. "I am very glad to learn, Mr. Lewis, that my husband has such respect for my commands ; and now that he has turned over a new leaf, I shall know what to calculate upon in the future."

The following evening Tom proposed a walk instead of a ride.

"Delightful, Tom," said Lydia, "and we will go to Aunt Rachel's spring ; it is a charming walk, and a quiet, lovely place. It will make me a child again to go there and sit beneath the old trees and drink of that sweet pure water. 'Shan't we go, Annie?"

"Most assuredly ; we could not find a better or more

pleasant walk, and we may perhaps find some grapes ; they are not yet very sweet, but I suppose they are eatable. Did you and Mr. Ray pass there yesterday morning, Tom ?”

“ Yes, and we saw the greatest quantity of the nicest grapes hanging in large, rich bunches from the thick vines ; I did not stop to taste them, but I judge they are very good, as we have had several frosts ; and, Lydia, the water in Aunty Rachel’s spring is just as fresh and clear as it was when we were little children, and I used to dip it up in my school-bucket for you to drink.”

“ You were always then a gallant, Mr. Gray, I suppose ?”

“ No, not much, Mr. Ray ; but Lydia was my sweetheart then, and I could never wait on her too much. You know that boys turn gentlemen right away as soon as they fall in love.”

“ And what do men turn, Mr. Gray ?” asked Mr. Lewis, looking up from the book he had been reading.

“ O, I don’t know ; simpletons, I reckon, some of them.”

Mr. Lewis smiled as he saw Fannie’s eyes rest upon him, and resumed his reading.

“ Come, Fannie, shall we lead the way ?” said Tom, walking up to her and offering his arm.

“ I will wait for my shawl and bonnet ; Annie has gone for them.”

“ Here she is with all the wrappings.”

“ You will wait a few minutes for me, if you please,” said Annie, as she placed Lydia’s shawl around her shoulders. “ I will be back directly.”

“ Come, Miss Fannie,” said Tom, “ we will walk

slowly, and Lydia and Annie can conduct the young gentlemen : they both know the way."

"Wait a moment, Mr. Gray and Miss Lydia, and I will go with you. We will leave Mr. Lewis to come with Miss Annie ; pleasant arrangement, Mr. Lewis, I suppose."

"Altogether agreeable, Mr. Ray."

"What a fine view of the surrounding country this knoll affords," remarked Mr. Lewis to Annie, as they reached the eminence which overlooked the spring, and on which stood a few magnificent oaks and sugar-trees, and some dwarfed cedars scattered here and there between. "How charmingly that landscape stretches away from our left, and loses itself in the faint outline of hill beyond. And here to our right we have the woodland just at hand, with trees of centuries' growth, while in front we can see beyond that clearing, in which the woodman's axe rings sharply, the smoke ascending from three distinct dwellings. And that low land just on our left, with its quiet little stream looking like a sinuous line of silver in the rays of the declining sun, how lovely it is with its carpet of russet and green ; while that skirt of forest, bringing up the rear, with its robe of glory, forms a fitting background to the charming picture. The country, always beautiful, is particularly so at this season of the year. There is an intellectual beauty, if I may so express myself, overspreading all nature—earth, air, and heaven—a silent voice in changing leaf and yellowing grass, and in the mournful winds, which speaks in warning words to man, the certainty of his own decay. A purer, holier feeling fills my soul, as I thus commune with these tokens of

my mortality, and it seems to me man must be better, more elevated in feeling, with these evidences of his passing away ever about him, wherever his eye can rest."

"The autumn is beautiful, Mr. Lewis, but I like the spring with its bursting flowers, and springing grass and changing sky, and glad sunshine, and dancing brooks. It is more in unison with my feelings. This spirit of death everywhere makes me sad. I can not throw off the melancholy it produces, and I sigh to see nature clothed again in her bright gay garments and wearing once more her sweet, glad smile."

"This melancholy of which you speak is dearer far to me than all the joyous outbursts of soul I ever experienced. While it keeps possession of my being, I seem to live as it were above the world, to commune with beatific spirits, to be guided by a light from the unseen glory, and to taste of the fountain of paradise. Could man be always happy here, could he know there is no darkness of the grave awaiting him, then would the spring be a fit emblem of his destiny. But as he is mortal, ever fading as the flower that perisheth, it is wisdom, yea mercy, in the Creator, thus to remind him, by the death of nature, of that great change which awaits him before he can realize that perfection of bliss which shall be his beyond the grave. And wise it is in man to gather up these lessons so plainly written on earth's great book, and bind them round his heart."

"I know what you say is just, Mr. Lewis, and yet, as I watch that falling leaf, and hear the low hoarse sighs of the wind as it sweeps through the decaying foliage of those trees, my heart is made sad within me, and I sigh for the life-giving spring, when that leaf

shall be replaced by one far more fresh and green, and the moanings of the wind be changed to sweetest music as it tells its tale of love to the dancing leaves. You may call it a silly, childish taste, Mr. Lewis, but 'tis what I feel."

"No, no, I do not call it a silly taste ; it is natural to all young hearts, and most to those that have been untouched by sorrow. You yearn for the awakening spring ; and thus should our souls long for that awakening to renewed life, when they shall arise in the vigor of immortality, not like the leaf to droop and die, but like the eternal One to live, ever increasing in glory and wisdom, in that higher state of being, throughout ever-enduring ages."

Annie was about to ask Mr. Lewis what were his ideas of that endless life, when the voice of Fannie caught her ear.

"See, Annie, we have brought you some grapes ; Cousin Ed. is a very ungallant fellow, not to have waited on you before ; fie, fie, cousin, I shall have to report this misdemeanor of yours, when I get home."

Annie raised her head, and hastily brushed away the gathered tear, but the movement, quick as it was, did not escape the searching eye of Lydia, who gave her a meaning look, which was answered by a faint smile. Fannie did not observe it, as she was handing the grapes to Mr. Lewis, and parrying with him about his want of attention to matters of etiquette. "Mr. Ray kept this for you, Annie," and she took a beautiful large bunch from her basket, and handed it to her ; "he said they were so nice and tempting, that you alone

should have them. A delicate way to manifest a preference, isn't it ?”

“I am much obliged to you, Mr. Ray, for your remembrance of me ; I shall appreciate them far beyond their real merits because of your kindness.”

“We knew you would not get any, Miss Annie, unless we attended to you. My friend, Mr. Lewis, is not much of a ladies' man in the matter of ‘little gallantries.’ He admires them very much, I assure you, and can fully appreciate their worth, but he can not pick up their handkerchief and present it, with an *à la mode* bow, nor place their shawls like an Adonis, nor hand them across a brook with an air, *à la Parisienne*. ‘He leaves such little matters to the boys,’ as he denominates such young gentlemen as Tom and I.”

“I thank you for your truthful delineation, and high recommendation, Mr. Ray,” and Mr. Lewis made the young gentleman a most polite bow.

“And we do not need such gallantries in the country, Mr. Ray,” replied Annie. “We learn to pick up our own handkerchiefs, and to put on our own shawls at a very early age ; it is one of the chief excellences of our good mothers to teach their children to wait on themselves ; and as to leaping trenches, we vie with our brothers in that accomplishment, from our childhood.”

They filled their baskets with grapes for the children, and Tom dipped a pitcher of water to carry to his mother from Aunty Rachel's spring, and left. Mr. Lewis and Annie lingered behind.

As they were nearing the house, he observed, in a quiet inclosure, between the garden and orchard, a few shafts of white marble, and observed, “I suppose this

is your burying-ground, Miss Annie; let us turn in thither."

"Yes, that is the spot where our dead are laid. We must pass this fence into the orchard, where we will find a little path leading to the side gate through which we can pass. Shall I call to Lydia and Fannie to go with us?"

"No, we will go alone; if they choose they can come another time; their hearts are not now in consonance with this sacred place."

They entered the gate, and moved toward the right, where stood two large tomb-stones, side by side. One bore more evidences of time than the other, but they both appeared to have been washed by the rains of many a winter's day. At their head was a large willow-tree, its branches weeping mournfully over the time-stained stones, while a little ivy clustering at its roots sent forth its tiny arms in the direction of the graves. A rose-tree stood at the foot, but it had been broken and neglected: a scraggy, dying bush, it gave no promise of future beauty and life.

"Your grand-parents rest here?" said Mr. Lewis, looking up from the stones whose inscriptions he had been reading.

"Yes, my mother's parents. That tree standing there at their head, was planted by my grandfather over my grandmother, when I was but a child. I remember the evening well, when, taking me by the hand, he led me to this spot, and here, mid tears and sighs, he placed what was then but a little bush. Five years after this, we brought him and laid him here beside her whom he had loved, and beneath the tree his own hand had planted."

"And that plain white slab, who sleeps there?"

"That is Lydia Truman's grave—Grace's sister. You no doubt have often heard Grace speak of her, for she was a favorite sister," and she moved toward the spot. Mr. Lewis followed her with gentle step. "She was a beautiful girl, so spiritual, so heavenly, her whole life was one of meekness and resignation, and her death was but a fading out into a purer, holier life. She passed from us as calmly, as peacefully, as sinks the closing day."

"How beautiful this inscription: 'I am the Resurrection and the Life.'"

"Yes, these were the last words she spoke on earth."

"And this is a beautiful device, too, the newly-blown rose fallen from the parent stem. Was she very young when she died?"

"She had but entered her fifteenth year."

Annie took a seat on a mound of rock near the foot of the grave, and Mr. Lewis seated himself by her. For some minutes neither spoke. She was living over again the few brief years with her who was sleeping so peacefully beneath the green sward on which her eyes rested; and he was looking into the future of this life and that "which is to come." He heaved a deep sigh, and said in a low, tremulous voice:

"How dark this world would be, Annie, were it not for the light which comes down to us through the portals of the upper world."

It was the first time he had called her name thus, and she started and looked up. He appeared not to notice her movement, but continued:

"What gloom and despair would ever hover round

man's pathway were the grave to him the end of his being. Like the criminal condemned to death, and compelled to drag his weary, clanking chains toward the gibbet, whose awful height ever meets his frenzied eye, and to which he knows every dragging step, however slowly made, but brings him nearer and nearer, so man, bereft of revelation's glorious light, would behold before him the dark and voiceless tomb, toward which each dawning day and setting sun would irresistibly force him, and into whose silent gulf he must plunge to rise no more forever. What a boon to us, poor mortals, that infinite Goodness has vouchsafed to us the lamp of heavenly truth to light our way and guide our steps to immortality and endless bliss."

He paused ; but she only bent her head lower, and replied not. She dared not trust her voice, silenced by emotion.

" 'I am the Resurrection and the Life,' " he repeated, as his eye rested on the cold, white slab : " how full of majesty and beauty—majestic in its announcement, beautiful in its simplicity, embodying the length and breadth of man's redemption ; yet so plain, that the veriest child-mind can comprehend it. Did you ever think, Annie, of the simplicity of the announcements of the plan of salvation ? They come to us in all the grandeur of conception of Almighty wisdom, yet clothed in language so simple that they are intelligible to the narrowest capacity of an accountable being : ' Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and ye shall be saved.' ' Surely the wayfaring man, though a fool, can not err' in this."

" This feature of the great truths of the Bible never

presented itself to my mind until I heard Father Miller preach a sermon from the words you have just quoted ; and yet, Mr. Lewis," she added after a pause, " it seems to me now a hard thing to rightly understand them ; they are so dark, so mysterious, my mind can not take them in."

" Of what do you speak, Annie ?"

" Of life, of death, of sin ; why we live, why we shall live, why man was suffered to sin. All these things puzzle me so ; I can not comprehend them !"

" And you never shall fully while the endless years of eternity roll their ceaseless round ; then how can the poor, finite soul ever hope to learn its alphabet ? ' Hidden things belong to God.' Should we be able to grasp these truths in all their momentous grandeur and extent, we should then ourselves be gods, but this can never be. We shall always remain the created of the Creator. But is there not enough which we can understand to enable us to escape the thralldom of sin and death, and to lead us into the liberty of the children of God, giving us a title to everlasting life ? We know, *we feel* that we are offenders against the law of some superior being ; this is implanted in the bosom of all mankind, and for this reason we find every nation, however ignorant and degraded, worshiping some object, which they regard superior to themselves, and by oblations, and sacrifices, and penances, endeavoring to propitiate an offended sovereign. I know, you know, that we have sinned against God, and therefore are exposed to his wrath ; we realize it each day we live, and the question is, ' how shall we escape his righteous indignation ?' We ask ' how can man be just with God ?' reason,

philosophy, natural religion, all are silent ; they can not make reply. 'Those things are hid from the wise and prudent.' But hear the voice of revelation as the answer comes back to us from the throne of God : 'Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and ye shall be saved.' 'By grace are ye saved through faith, and that not of yourselves ; it is the gift of God.' "

"Then should we not wait patiently, Mr. Lewis, until this gift is bestowed ? Our vain attempts can not change God's purposes."

"True, Annie, but what is the voice of revelation here ? 'Ask, and ye shall receive,' saith he who 'spake as never man spake.' No asking, no receiving. 'Yet will I be inquired of, by the house of Israel, to do it for them.' 'Come unto me,' the Saviour commands, and the promise is, 'I will in no wise cast you out.' We must come for the blessing, Annie, even life-everlasting, if we would receive it. God is ever ready, ever willing, to bestow this priceless treasure upon all who will seek to find it, but he never forces it upon any one. We must knock, and *it will* be opened unto us."

"I have thought and thought upon this subject, Mr. Lewis, until I could think no longer, but it is so mysterious, so dark, that I sometimes feel like despairing. I seek for light, but all remains deep darkness ; I ask, yet do not receive. Most gladly would I, if I could, lay hold on the promises of the Bible. It is the strongest desire of my heart ; O that I could be a Christian," she added, with deep emphasis.

"You ask, Annie, and do not receive, this is because you ask amiss. If we come in our own name, relying on our own merits, we shall be spurned from the throne

of the Most High, for our righteousness is as filthy rags in the sight of the pure eye of God. We must come believing that his is the only name given under heaven whereby we can be saved, that his blood can cleanse from all sin, and that 'he will have mercy and not sacrifice.'"

"I think I believe all this, Mr. Lewis ; these truths have been taught me from my childhood, but I can not realize their importance as I should."

"You must ask *his Spirit*, Annie, to enlighten your mind, to direct your thoughts, to lead you in the right way. He alone can impart to you the power to see the exceeding sinfulness of your own *heart* ; he alone can give you a just view of your own unworthiness. You must seek his aid ; and this you will do, Annie, won't you ?" he asked in a tone full of pleading earnestness, at the same time taking the hand that rested on her lap.

"For your own sake, Annie ; for my sake, I beg you to give earnest heed to these things ; will you promise ?"

A tear falling on his hand was her only reply.

"I have spoken warmly, Annie, but could you look into my inmost soul, and there read my deep anxiety for your welfare, you would find that I feel all, yea much more than my words can convey. Will you heed my request ? As one who feels all the deep interest of a friend—yea more than the dearest friend—I ask this of you. Will you promise me to do what I have asked ?"

He clasped her hand more firmly, and looked into her face with an intensity of expression she had never before seen him wear, and which spoke to her, far more meaningfully than his words, the deep feelings of his heart.

"Will you do it, Annie?"

She raised her eyes to his.

"I will, Mr. Lewis," she answered, in a voice whose tone told the firmness of the resolve.

"And for my sake, Annie?"

"For your sake."

No more was said. How poor are words to speak the heart's deep utterance. The language of the soul asks not for earthly garb wherewith to clothe itself.)

Placing her hand in his arm, they arose and walked toward the house.

CHAPTER XI.

THE CHURCH MEETING.—THE SABBATH.

- **MR. LEWIS** had not attended a church meeting since his boyhood ; and, feeling very desirous to become acquainted with Baptist government and usages, he gladly availed himself of the opportunity to accompany Mr. and Mrs. Gray, on Saturday, to their regular church meeting. The young ladies preferred to remain at home, as did the young gentlemen.

The meeting-house was a plain brick building, which, although in good repair, bore the marks of time's destroying march. It was situated on a slight elevation, about one hundred and fifty yards from the main road. A gradual ascent led to it in front, while the rear was skirted by a narrow stretch of woodland, which answered the double purpose of shading the house from the heat of the summer's sun, and of affording a most excellent place to hitch the horses in, of those who did not come in carriages and buggies. A double row of three windows, with plain green shutters, admitted the light on either side ; while opposite the doors in the front, were two other windows that afforded increased light to the pulpit which stood between them. The internal construction of the house had been entirely modernized in the last five years, the pulpit being removed from the

side to the end of the building, and the seats, which formerly had stood in squares, with short aisles crossing each other at right angles, were now arranged into blocks, with two aisles leading from the doors to the pulpit. To the right of the church, after the custom of the times when it was built, stood an old school-house. But it was vacated now, and fast hastening to ruin, and was only used to stow away saddles and blankets in, on rainy days ; for the boys and girls that here had first had planted in their young minds the embryo seeds of knowledge and usefulness, quickened and brought to life by the "tender mercies" of old Mr. Mason's ferrule, had long since been sent away to colleges and seminaries ; and the green no longer rung with the merry shout of the school-boy, as he chased his ball, nor echoed the gladsome laugh of the happy girls as they built their mimic houses beneath the old oaks, or played "prisoner's base," and "king, king, can I go?" as if the sunshine of their summer's day should ne'er be succeeded by the beating storms and chilling winds of winter.

Who can not look back on his school days, and say, "*Then* was I happy?"

As they approached the church in front, they saw "Father Miller" and "the old lady," as the parson always denominated his most excellent wife, riding up on the opposite side.

"We are early enough, Mr. Lewis," remarked Mr. Gray, "there is Father Miller, and he is always in time."

"Never late? that is something unusual for a preacher, isn't it?"

"Not for him, I assure you ; I suppose he was never fifteen minutes behind the time, in his life ; and he in-

variably begins to preach at the precise minute, whether the people have assembled or not. He was never known to fail to meet an appointment to preach but once, in my remembrance, and then it was on account of personal illness—a sudden and violent fit of cramp making it impossible for him to ride. Always punctual himself, he has trained his members, and indeed the whole congregation to be so, and whenever any one comes in late, we know he is a stranger, without seeing him.”

“What an influence such undeviating punctuality must give him.”

“It does, most certainly.”

They walked toward the aged pair, who had just alighted, and bade them “good-morning.”

“So you have come, Mr. Lewis, to see how Baptists conduct themselves in a church meeting? Well, I am glad to see you so much interested in all that pertains to us as a denomination. We will have a very unpleasant case before us to-day, but I hope it will terminate favorably, and not be the occasion of any hard feelings among the brethren.”

There were but five sisters and three brethren present when they entered the meeting-house, and they were gathered around the stove, discussing the case of Brother Williams, which was to be decided that day. Sorrow was depicted on every face, for they feared that the offender would prove incorrigible, and they would be forced to cut him off from their body.

Mr. Lewis was introduced to the gentlemen by Father Miller, who rose and gave their chairs to those just arrived. Mr. Lewis looked at his watch, and found it was just 10 o'clock. In a few minutes others came in,

and then others, until the congregation reached about fifty, the number of persons usually in attendance.

These brethren and sisters did not forget their church meeting day ; nor did they, like too many of our city members, stay at home because it was not entirely convenient for them to go. They felt it a duty, or rather it was a privilege, to fill their seats in the house of God ; they loved his courts, they loved to work in his vineyard for the advancement of their Master's cause on earth ; they loved to inquire for the spiritual welfare of those who with them were journeying toward the heavenly Canaan ; they loved to sing the songs of Zion together ; to send up their petitions as the voice of one man to the Father's throne ; to grasp each other's hand in brotherly love ; to shed for each other the sympathizing tear.

"How good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity ; it is like the dew of Hermon, and as the dew that descended upon the mountains of Zion ; for there the Lord commanded the blessing, even life for evermore."

Theirs was a religion of the heart, "pure and undefiled," and not merely of the intellect. Neither a "dead orthodoxy, which," as one of our city preachers remarked a few Sabbaths since in the pulpit, "like the measles in cold, had struck in," nor yet "a living, active, benevolent error," which another *very orthodox* minister would fain have us believe, "is far better than the dead orthodoxy," as though an error could be any the better because it was "living and active." Strange gospel this. Surely we have fallen on perilous times in doctrine, when a "watchman on the walls of Zion" would

have us believe such dogmas as this; and sound in our ears the startling declaration, that "*a half salvation is better than none.*"

How shall such men give an account of their stewardship? Shall it not be done "with fear and trembling," rather than with "rejoicing?" The blessed word of God teaches us, in language too plain to be mistaken, that the salvation wrought out by Christ is full, complete; and that "he that is not *for him*" is "*against him.*" Then how dare men talk about "A HALF SALVATION?" Surely, surely "the leaders of the people do cause them to err," teaching for the doctrines of God the foolishness of men.

A song was sung, and the aged man of God poured out his soul in prayer for the fallen brother, who had set aside his solemn vows to indulge his own carnal appetite. Long and earnestly he prayed that, like David of old, he might be brought to see his great wickedness, and be led to repent of his transgression. After this he opened the Bible before him, and read the eighteenth chapter of Matthew, dwelling at length on those verses which embody the discipline of the Baptist church.

The sermon was finished, and Father Miller, minister, taking the moderator's chair, called the body to order, and requested that the rules and regulations of the church should be read, that all might fully understand how to act in the case before them.

When "reports of committees" were asked for, Brother Long, who was chairman of the committee in the case of Brother Williams, rose, and in a faltering voice, read this report: "They had seen the wayward brother, and had dealt with him faithfully, prayerfully,

pointing out to him with candor and kindness the evil of his course ; entreating him to acknowledge his sin to the church, and to beseech the forgiveness of God. But he had turned a deaf ear to all their counsel and entreaties, and had positively refused to appear before the church or to make any confession."

Every head was bowed while the report was read, and sighs and sobs were heard throughout the house. The brother was one who had long been a member with them ; one whom they had loved and fellowshiped through many a year, but in an evil hour he fell. He "looked upon the wine when it was red, when it gave itself color in the cup," and "it had bitten him like a serpent, and stung him like an adder." His brethren expostulated with him, and he promised amendment. But his heart was set in him to do evil, and again he fell ; with tears he sought their forgiveness, and it was extended to him. But the tempter's voice had strange music in it to his ear, and again he sinned ; and now all their prayers and earnest entreaties fell powerless on his hardened heart, and he sternly refused to make any acknowledgment.

"Brethren," said the aged minister, rising, and wiping away the fast-falling tears, "you have heard the report on Brother Williams's case ; he has refused to appear before you to-day, as he consented to do, and also steadily refuses to make any concession of his wrong ; now what will you do ?"

For several moments all were silent ; their hearts were bowed to the earth. At length Brother McDonald, one of the committee, rose, and making a few remarks, with deep feeling, moved "that Brother Williams be ex-

cluded from the fellowship of the church." "I second that motion," said an aged brother, removing his handkerchief from his face. Then again all was hushed as the grave, save now and then when a sob or sigh broke the stillness.

The moderater rose, and, commanding himself as well as he could, said, in a low, solemn voice, "All of you who are in favor of excluding Brother Williams from our fellowship on account of his intemperance, thereby transgressing the laws of our body and of God; will make it known by holding up the right hand."

One hand was slowly raised, then another, and another, till every member of the church had voted.

"Should there be any one in this house wishing to retain this brother in our midst, he will please make it known by the same sign."

Not a hand was raised. The case had been carefully, thoroughly investigated, and each one felt that justice had been done. The cause of God and of right demanded at their hands the act they had performed. But it was a sad trial to each heart to turn out from their bosom as a heathen man and a publican, one whom they had loved, and with whom they had often held sweet converse as they traveled on toward the "better country." And many a silent prayer from bowed hearts was poured into their heavenly Father's ear that the erring one might be reclaimed, the wanderer brought back into the fold.

It was a touching sight, that little company of God's people weeping in bitterness of soul over the lost brother. One in heart, one in hope, one in purpose, they were bound together in strongest bonds of love, striving to

do the Master's work; and the Master, "because they had kept the word of his patience, would also keep them from the hour of temptation which shall come upon all the world to try them that dwell upon the earth."

Other business of less importance was attended to, and they moved to adjourn. A prayer was offered by Deacon Branham, in which the backslider was earnestly recommended to the mercy of God, and to the guidance of his Holy Spirit, and a blessing was sought upon their church and pastor. Then the little flock dispersed, each one to his own home.

"Say who is she that looks abroad,
Like the sweet blushing dawn,
When, with her living light, she paints
The dew-drops of the lawn;

"Fair as the moon, when in the skies
Serene, her throne she guides,
And o'er the twinkling stars, supreme,
In full orb'd glory rides;

"Clear as the sun when from the east
Without a cloud he springs,
And scatters boundless light and heat
From his resplendent wings;

"Tremendous as a host that moves,
Majestically slow,
With banners wide displayed, all armed
And ardent for the foe?

"This is the CHURCH, by heaven arrayed
With strength and grace divine;
Thus shall she strike her foes with dread,
And thus her glories shine."

"And how do you like Baptist usage, so far as you

have become acquainted with it?" asked Mr. Gray of Mr. Lewis as they rode home.

"Very well pleased indeed, sir."

"Entirely democratic, you see; each member expresses his choice, by his vote, and from the decision of the church there is no appeal."

"You recognize no higher authority, then?"

"None; no presbytery, nor synod, nor general assembly, nor conference—no higher tribunal than each individual church. Our discipline is learned from the Bible, and we admit no authority which it does not teach. 'If thy brother trespass against thee, and will not be reconciled in the presence of two or three witnesses, tell it unto the church; but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as a heathen man and a publican.' This, to my mind, teaches explicitly that there is no power beyond the church."

"So it appears to me, Mr. Gray. I am convinced, as far as I have informed myself, that your church is founded after the apostolic pattern. I am very anxious to hear to-morrow's sermon; Mr. Miller will no doubt trace the resemblance between Baptist churches and those established by the apostles."

"Yes; I have no doubt that you will be pleased and edified. In clearness and force, I think Brother Miller equals any one I have ever listened to. His mind by nature is strong and comprehensive. He has studied his profession closely, his reading is extensive and thorough."

Sabbath morning came. The aspect of the clouds was dark and threatening, and for some time the young ladies hesitated to go. Mr. Lewis felt deeply anxious

that Fannie should attend, and he laughingly rallied them on their want of courage. He wished that she should hear and judge for herself while her mind was free from extraneous influences.

"I think you had better go, young ladies," he replied, to Annie's rather doubting answer to her mother's question.

"We will leave it to Mr. Gray's judgment," exclaimed Fannie. "What do you think of it, Mr. Gray?"

"I think you can go without any danger of getting wet, Miss Fannie. The clouds are breaking away, and I expect we shall yet have a bright day."

"We will go then," exclaimed Lydia, who was charmed with the prospect of again seeing so many of her friends.

It was quite early when they reached the church, and Fannie had time to observe the interior of the house before the services began.

It was a plain, but very neat room. The white-washed walls were of spotless purity, and the high-backed, uncushioned benches had been so often scoured by the sisters in their spring cleanings, that they seemed almost to vie with the walls in whiteness. The aisles and the space in front of the pulpit were carpeted with a plain, Scotch carpet. True, the figures, which were rather large, did not match very well in some places, but then they wished to economize, and it was so clean, and so smoothly put down, that it looked exceedingly well. The pulpit was high and old-fashioned, with its immaculate balustrade lined with crimson moreen, and on its cushionless front lay the leather-backed Bible and hymn-

book, while on the side stood the little white pitcher and glass, so indispensable to the comfort of ministers. The windows on each side of the pulpit were shaded so as to shut out the glaring noonday sun. The pillars which ranged on either side of the aisles were hung with sconces which had been rubbed until they were as bright as tin could be made. The gallery, which ranged on three sides of the building, was appropriated to the colored members, and on this occasion they were pretty well filled at an early hour. The stoves which served to warm the house, stood near the termination of the aisles, to the right and left of the pulpit.

As we have before said, it was the Sabbath of their regular monthly meeting, and communion season ; and old and young, white and black, laid aside the cares of life to come up to the house of God, to listen to the words of heavenly truth and wisdom from the lips of him who was a living epistle of their power and consolation, seen and read of all ; and long before the hour for preaching came, the seats were mostly occupied by those whose souls longed for the bread of life and the fountain of living waters.

As the aged minister passed down the aisle he paused to speak with the brethren and sisters sitting convenient, and the warmth with which they grasped his thin, wrinkled hand, fully attested the deep feelings of their hearts, while the smile that lighted up each countenance as he spoke a word of greeting, told their appreciation of the worth of this simple act of kindness from the man they loved.

“He is truly an under-shepherd,” thought Fannie, as she looked upon him ; “one who goes in and out before

his people in humility and the fear of God, leading them into the green pastures of truth and righteousness, and by the still waters of peace and love. He is one who has put on the *whole armor* of God," she said to herself, as she gazed on that benignant brow, wrinkled and seamed by the hand of years, yet beautiful still in its expression of resignation and trust ; "I read the triumphs of faith in that placid smile ; the presence of that hope which reaches within the veil, in the kindlings of that time-dimmed eye ; the indwelling of the Spirit of grace, in that look of love which makes radiant that wan face, and which seems ever to repeat, ' Peace on earth, and good will to men.' "

She was aroused from these reflections by the singing of the first hymn, in which most of those present joined.

" Did Christ o'er sinners weep,
And shall our cheeks be dry ?"

was the burden of their song ; and sweet music did they make, as they uttered with the heart, as well as the lips, the words of this precious old, hymn.

Then came a prayer, fervent, beseeching, from the depths of his soul, who bore up to the throne of God the wants of himself and his people, and invoked from the fullness of the heavenly grace a blessing on their heads.

Then how appropriate the words ; and with what sympathy and feeling the little band sung,

" Blest be the tie that binds
Our hearts in Christian love ;
The fellowship of kindred minds
Is like to that above," etc, etc

The song was ended, and the minister rose, and placing the open Bible, which he held in his hand, on the desk before him, read, "Else what shall they do which are baptized for the dead, if the dead rise not at all?" Every eye was fixed upon him as he repeated, in a full, deep voice, these words of the apostle's question to the church at Corinth.

His subject was divided into two heads: Baptism, its *action* and *design*, and Communion. First he spoke of the positive ordinances of the New Testament, their nature and obligation, showing that they derive their moral power from the authority of the Institutor, and that it is binding upon every follower of the blessed Redeemer to observe them according to the example given; that we have no right to substitute one jot or tittle on the plea that manner or mode is non-essential; premising that all present were advocates of believer's baptism, he passed to the consideration of the mode or action, and the design of the rite; that it was the total immersion of the candidate in water, he proved by reference to the baptism of the Saviour, which is our pattern, and by the practice of the apostles, as recorded in the New Testament. The following texts were introduced as testimony: "Then went out to him Jerusalem and all Judea, and all the region round about Jordan, and were baptized of him in Jordan, confessing their sins." (Matt., iii. 5, 6.) "You will perceive, my friends, that these people were not baptized *at* the Jordan, nor *with* the Jordan, nor *upon* the Jordan, neither was it baptized *upon* them, for the words expressly declare that they were baptized *in* Jordan, for our English *in* is but the adoption of the Greek *en*,

which is the preposition here ; and we could with as much propriety say, a man was *with* a house, or *upon* a house, or *by* a house, when we mean to convey the idea that he is *in* the house, as to use either of these words here instead of *in*. ‘ And John, also, was baptizing at Enon, near to Salim, *because there was much water there*; and they came and were baptized.’ You see *why* John baptized at Enon rather than elsewhere, and although our Pedit-baptist friends argue that this ‘ *much water*’ was only a few rivulets, and that they were for the accommodation of the thirsty camels that brought the people to John, that he might *sprinkle* them, yet we insist that it was for the purpose of *immersing* those who had professed faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, for the language is, he was baptizing there ‘ *because there was much water*.’ ‘ And they went *down* both *into* the water, both Philip and the eunuch ; and he baptized him, and when they were come *up out of the water*, the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip.’ (Acts, viii. 38, 39.) Here we read they went *down into the water*, and he baptized him, and after this was done, they came ‘ *up out of the water*.’ ”

He then gave, in a brief but conclusive summary, the testimony of historians of all denominations in favor of immersion, and the meaning of the Greek word *baptizo* as conceded by all lexicographers of any standing. He then passed to the *design* of baptism, showing that it is an evidence of our faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, and an expression of our love to him, and willingness to obey his commands, manifesting that we have been crucified to the sins of the flesh, and are made new creatures in Christ Jesus, that as he has suffered in our

stead we do show forth our gratitude and love to him, by following him into the liquid grave. It is also a type of his burial and resurrection from the dead.

“Know ye not that as many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized *into his death*. Therefore we are *buried* with him *by baptism into death*, that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall also be in the likeness of his resurrection.” (Romans, vi. 3, 4, 5.) “Else what shall they do which are *baptized for the dead*, if the dead rise not at all? Why are they then *baptized for the dead*?” (1 Cor., xv. 29.) “*Buried with him in baptism*, wherein ye also are *risen with him*.” (Col., ii. 12.)

The arguments deduced from these passages were clear and conclusive. Fannie as well as Mr. Lewis felt their force and power.

“Surely I must be convinced,” she exclaimed to herself; “can I believe in sprinkling against such proof as this?”

“And now I come,” said the earnest man of God, “to the second division of my discourse, which I shall not dwell upon at much length; as it is conceded by all denominations of Christians, that baptism must precede communion, I need not argue that it is a church ordinance, belonging to those and those *only*, who have submitted themselves to the requirements which constitute the members of Christ’s visible kingdom. But I would add, that I am a close communionist in the most restricted sense of the term. Convinced as I am that there are *churches* and not a *church* of

Christian believers on earth, and that an individual can belong to but *one* of these churches at the same time, and that the particular body to which he belongs, alone has the right of guardianship over him. I believe we do wrong to extend *privileges* beyond the limit of our *discipline*. Hear what the apostle says in his advice to the Corinthians, (1 Cor., v. 4, 5): 'In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when ye are gathered together, and my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ. To deliver such an one to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.' In the 7th verse, he says: 'Purge out therefore the old leaven that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened ;' and again, verse 8: 'Let us keep the feast, not with old leaven ;' and again, verse 12: 'Do ye not judge them that are within ?' evidently implying an acquaintance with and discipline over those who presented themselves as candidates to celebrate the ordinances. And when we offer the elements to those of the same faith and order with ourselves, we leave them to judge, while it is expected of us 'to judge them that are within,' and have we not the same right to leave it to the consciences of others, those who believe that they have been baptized, as fully as we do that we have been."

"I can not see, my brethren, any warrant in the Scriptures for our present liberal practice ; and were we to follow the teachings of the apostle just quoted, how much difficulty might be avoided, what a glaring inconsistency we might save ourselves from. If we make immersion the only pre-requisite to communion, why not partake of the supper with *all* who have been im-

mersed, whether they be Methodists, or Reformers, or Cumberland Presbyterians, for, you know, all these sects admit, by practice, the validity of immersion. But let me illustrate: Suppose a brother, excluded from our midst for reasons which to us, as a church, seemed amply sufficient to justify the act, were to present himself to another church of the same faith and order, and they, not fully understanding the case, or not deeming our act a just one, should receive him into the fellowship; don't you see that he would be as much entitled to commune with us as though he were one of us? And although we might be convinced in our own hearts that he was not a child of God, yet we dare not, according to our own established rules, refuse to commune with him, we might feel that, like the changers of money, and the sellers of doves, he ought to be cast out of the temple of the Most High; yet we must, in accordance with our present usage, break with him the bread, an emblem of the sufferings of him to whom, in his impiety, he has said, 'I will not have this man to rule over me.'"

In a few very appropriate words, characterized by deep emotion, he spoke of the design of the ordinance they were about to celebrate—of the love of the dying Jesus, who was made a ransom for us, suffering in our stead, that we, who were enemies to God might be reconciled to him through the merits of his blood.

It was a solemn, a touching scene—that little company of believers gathered together to commemorate the death of their blessed Lord. Every head was bowed, and every heart sent up a silent prayer for faith to believe, for love to appreciate, this testimonial of his goodness, who was slain for their sins.

And the Holy Spirit spoke words of peace and consolation to their longing hearts, and their spiritual strength was renewed, and their zeal enlivened; and they felt able to "run with patience the race set before them."

A blessing was asked upon the bread they were about to break.

"Take eat; this is my body which is broken for you; this do, in remembrance of me;" and the speaker's voice was hushed.

Not a word was spoken while the deacons passed the bread. It was supposed that every one present understood the significance of the ordinance, and each heart was left to its own communings—to feed upon the bread of life, the hidden manna of the soul.

How vividly did the wine, as it gushed into the goblet, call up before them the flowing blood from the pierced side!

"This cup is the New Testament in my blood; this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me."

No more was added. A deep, unbroken stillness reigned throughout the assembled congregation. The eye of faith was fixed on Calvary, and as they drank in remembrance of him who shed his blood so freely there, how many a penitent heart could say, "that blood was spilt for me!"

"And after they had sung a hymn, they went out."

CHAPTER XII.

"THE RETREAT."

WHAT heartfelt gratification, what inexpressible satisfaction does it give, particularly to the beginner in the mystic round of housekeeping, to feel, for the first time, embosomed in all the comforts and privileges of "our own home." Like Defoe's shipwrecked Crusoe, to look round us and realize that we are "monarch of all we survey," imparts a consciousness of independence, position, and freedom, that no other situation in life can confer. It matters not whether the *all* include the palace with its regal wealth and magnificence—the lordly mansion, with its luxury and ease—the old farm house, with its appendages of comfort and thrift—or the cottage, with its sunshine and honeysuckle—the feeling is the same, that of elevated social position. And it gives, too, a promise of future joy and happiness ; for shall we not henceforth be shut in from the prying curiosity of the world, and be partakers of that "only bliss of paradise that has survived the fall?" The cottage, with its walks, its gardens, its trees, its sunshine, and bird-music, *is all our own!* Our city of refuge from the cares of the world, our holiest of sanctuaries. Domestic happiness ! there is no earthly joy beyond it. It is a ray of Eden glory, vouchsafed to man to light his so-

jour here—a shadowing, though but dim, of that heavenly glory which the mortal eye hath never seen—the signet-ring of heaven, whereby is sealed to us the type of the happiness of the family above.

So thought, and so felt Grace, as, after the excitement and fatigue of the day, she looked around on her little home. It was but a cottage-home, plain and unpretending, without and within, but to her an earthly paradise. She asked no more, but thanked the Giver of all good that he had bestowed upon her this rich bounty. There were no vine-trellised windows, nor fragrant honeysuckles draping gracefully white frames—only a few roses blooming on neglected bushes. These were her wealth of flowers, her only ornaments; and they were very beautiful to her, contrasting, as they did most charmingly, their blushing forms with the emerald of the little front yard, and smiling on so hopefully amid the surrounding evidences of decay.

The house was somewhat out of repair, for it had been untenanted through the winter and spring; and as only a day had elapsed between the threat of her husband and its execution, there had been but little time for refitting. But with the assistance of Mrs. Holmes and Fannie, and the superintendence of old Aunt Peggy, who was everywhere as busy a body as could be, overlooking the younger servants, together with her husband's skill in planning, and activity in executing, they were soon very comfortably domiciled in their new home.

It had been a sore trial to Grace to leave her father's house under such unpleasant circumstances; to be driven out, as it were, for her persistence in what she sincerely

believed to be right. But she had bound to her heart this precious promise, "I will never leave nor forsake thee," and giving up all into his hands, "who is faithful to perform," she went forward in his strength, nothing fearing, for she remembered "that God was her rock, and the high God her Redeemer." And all through the day, as she went about her work of preparation, her spirit sent up to the Most High, though inaudible to mortal ear, praises and thanksgivings embodied in that beautiful hymn, which was such a stay and comfort to Carson amid his dark trial, when, for conscience' sake, he gave up every earthly prospect to follow Christ in baptism :

"And must I part with all I have,
My dearest Lord, for thee?
It is but right, since thou hast done
Much more than this for me.

"Yes, let it go! one look from thee
Will more than make amends
For all the losses I sustain,
Of credit, riches, friends.

"Ten thousand worlds, ten thousand lives,
How worthless they appear,
Compared with thee, supremely good,
Divinely bright and fair.

"Saviour of souls! could I from thee
One single smile obtain,
Though destitute of all things else,
I'd glory in my gain."

"Yes," she repeated to herself, as the dark words and harsh conduct of her husband's father came up to her mind,

"It is but right, since thou hast done
Much more than this for me."

And when the day's labor was ended, and she looked round on her snug, cheerful home, and gazed into her husband's happy face, listened to his words of approbation and hope, as he went about from room to room, and place to place, filled with admiration at the tidy, comfortable appearance every thing wore, she felt that *already* light was beginning to gild the darkness ; and, while the earthly gloom was fast disappearing, the "Sun of righteousness" shone in upon her soul, "with healing in his beams." Thus is the "Lord our strength in the time of trouble."

When old Mr. Holmes found that his son was fixed in his purpose, he gave him such furniture and servants as he had intended for him, and after this was done, he manifested no further interest in the matter. Throughout the whole preparation, he preserved the most sullen silence, scarcely deigning to reply to the few necessary questions put to him. Even the children observed a change in his deportment ; and little Neddie, with his childish heart overflowing with sympathy, stole to his side, as the old man sat in the front porch, wrapped in gloomy grandeur, watching the last piece of furniture, as it was put into the wagon, and, laying his hand on his father's knee, asked, in his sweet, childish way, "Ain't you sick, papa ? you looks like it." The old man gave him a shove, as he answered, in a rough voice, "No, child, go away." When Grace came to bid him good-morning, his manner was so cold and forbidding that the tears rushed to her eyes as she offered him her hand. He neither rose from his seat, nor spoke ; indeed, he scarcely looked at her.

As she turned away, and wiped the fast-falling tears

from her eyes, she said to herself, "This is hard to bear, I do not deserve such treatment ; but I must submit to it. I go forth for my principles, and God will guide and support me. O, Shepherd of Israel ! thou that leadest Joseph like a flock, keep my footsteps that I fall not ; for thou art *now my only* defense ; thou art my only rock of refuge."

And He who answers, even before we call, made haste to help her ; and panoplied in the armor of his love, "who is a wall of defense round about his people," she turned to the conflict ; to follow him through "evil, as well as through good report."

Despair not, youthful champion ; remember the exceeding great reward of "patient continuance in well-doing." "The vail that shuts out the future from thy longing, earnest eye, is woven by the hand of Mercy," and she will, in due time, remove its intervening folds.

On the first mention of the new arrangement, Aunt Peggy besought her mistress to permit her to go "to live with mas'r John, an' Miss Gracey. She is but a young thing, you know, missis, and wants somebody to kind o' go afore her. Dese young folks don't know much, when dey firs' begins, but dey learns arter awhile, and I 'spects Miss Gracey will make a first-rate house-keeper afore long."

"I have not a word to say in the matter, Aunt Peggy ; you must ask your master : if he is willing, you can go."

Aunt Peggy stationed herself at the dining room door to make known her desire to her master, as he passed out from the dinner table. She thought he would be more inclined to grant her request when the wants of

the inner man had been fully administered to. Aunt Peggy was a philosopher !

"And what do you want to go for, Peggy?" said the old man, in a sharp tone, as he turned full round upon her. "What do you want to leave your mistress for, at this old age?" The feast of fat things had not altogether mollified him.

"I wants to go, if you please, to kind o' d'rect Miss Gracey. You know she is so young, massa, she sometimes won't know what to do 'bout her 'fairs, and den I could tell her. Dis is my only reason, sir."

The old gentleman knit his brow, and hesitated, as if considering whether it would not be too great a favor to both parties to grant the old servant's request. But the thought struck him, that there would be no one to sow dissension in his family when she was gone, and turning round suddenly to go off, he said, as he did so, in a quick, curt voice :

"Yes, Peggy, you can go ; the fact of the business is, you had all better go together, then the trouble will be ended."

The old woman waited for no further permission or command, but busied herself in gathering together her worldly stores, and getting leave of her master for Dick to take her over in the cart, she found herself at the new home in time to give directions to Jane, the young cook, about supper.

It was a happy home ; this little whitewashed cottage that Grace had named "Retreat." Let us look at it a moment, about four weeks after it had become the habitation of Grace.

Pleasantly situated on an eminence with beautiful

grounds around, it stood just without the village, of which it commanded a fine view. The road ran in sight, but not near enough to make it a public place ; a footpath spanned the meadow that intervened between it and Mount Airy, which could be seen from the south window of Grace's room. Behind the house, from the back of the garden, the fields, now in a state of high cultivation, trended away to the background of woodland which skirted the horizon. A large beech tree, which, in summer time, threw its shade half over the little front yard, stood to the right as you approached the latticed porch, which had recently been added. The few rose bushes, and cedars, standing equi-distant from each other, along the front fence, had been robbed of all superfluous growth. And the lilac, which stood to the left, as if in mimic opposition to the beech, had also undergone the trimming process, and looked so fresh and green as almost to give promise of a second flowering. Newly-spaded flower-beds, with annual fall flowers just breaking the mold with their tender heads, bordered the pavement. The garden, too, had been plowed, and planted in such things as would mature before the coming of the frost. Every thing, within and without, gave evidence of neatness and thrift, for Grace, though a very young housekeeper, was a very good one ; and Aunt Peggy found that her province was to suggest, rather than to direct.

The sun threw a glorious radiance over meadow and fields, stole in through the open window and past the snowy muslin curtain, falling in a quiver of golden arrows at the feet of Grace, as she sat in her sewing-chair finishing a piece of floss work. Her husband, just

returned from the business of the day, for he yet overlooked his father's farm, was resting on the lounge at her side, telling her of the occurrences of the day, to which she was listening with deep interest. The tea-table, with its stainless cloth and glistening furniture, stood in the centre of the room. To the right of Grace was her work-stand, on which rested a vase of roses and cedar, to which had been added the field flowers brought her by her husband ; and the weekly journal, which it was his habit to read aloud after the day's business was finished, laid by the side of the flower vase. In the corner was a table of books and magazines which were Grace's companions when her husband was away. Jane was in the kitchen getting supper ; and old Aunt Peggy, having seen that all was right in that department, had gone to gather up the chickens and put them in their respective coops before it was dark ; for there was a mink somewhere in the neighborhood, and she could not trust them in the hen-house.

Surely into this little Eden no serpent will ever enter ; over this love-lit dwelling no cloud will ever gather !

Grace had many pleasant visitors to enliven the hours of her husband's absence ; for her gentleness and sincerity had won for her numerous friends in the village and country. It was a delightful walk to the "Retreat," and it was a charming place at which to spend an hour or two when one was there. Mrs. Holmes and Fannie often came to pass the day or evening, and their kindness and love to her in some measure made amends for old Mr. Holmes's ill-treatment. He rarely ever called, and when he did, it was to see his son on business. His manner toward Grace continued cold and forbidding.

Could it be expected of him to come down from the heights of his dignity when she persisted in her advocacy of such erroneous opinions? O no! Not one jot or tittle would he yield. "He would show her what it was to hold out against his desire. Such obstinacy and narrow-mindedness deserved to be punished with the utmost severity. How dared she oppose the teachings of his church, to withstand the opinions of the learned and wise? Was such presumption ever known before? But he would bring her to, yes, that he would! She must be made to feel the extent of her impertinence: it might take some time to accomplish it, for she was pretty stiff-necked; but it should be done; no daughter-in-law of his should be a Baptist: he would not stand the disgrace." Thus he reasoned with himself, and thus he acted.

Grace was pierced to the heart by his treatment, for she fully understood his motives; but she remembered the promise, "I am with you always," and was strengthened to bear the burden.

Mr. Lewis often came to sit with them till after tea. He loved the quiet and homelike appearance of the little whitewashed cottage. It was usual for him, on such occasions, to report his progress in the study of the baptismal question, and to engage in conversation with Grace on that subject. At such times Mr. Holmes proved an attentive listener; lying on the lounge, he would give earnest heed to what was being said, often asking questions, or making comments. It was evident he was interested, and was determined to avail himself of the benefit of Mr. Lewis's study without much exertion to himself. On one occasion, after having given

very close attention to his cousin's proof in favor of believer's baptism, he rose, and approaching him, said, in quite an earnest manner :

"I believe, Ed., that you and Grace will make a Baptist of me yet." Then, after a pause, he added : "But what is the use for me to change ? You have no church here, if I should be converted to your views, for me to join."

"Father Miller has promised to preach for us in Weston next fall, you know, Mr. Holmes," said Grace, catching at the faintest shadow of promise of change in his views, "and you will then have an opportunity to show us whether our arguments have convinced you or not," and the young wife regarded her husband with an expression half playful, half earnest.

"I shall give no promises for the future, for fear I shall not perform them ; we will wait until Father Miller shall come, and then see."

CHAPTER XIII.

LIGHTS AND SHADOWS—JOYS AND SORROWS.

WEEKS hurried by, and the light of love and joy still lingered round the cottage home. Grace had her little troubles and annoyances as all housekeepers do. But as long as love and confidence keep watch at the portals, unhappiness can not intrude.

But at length the shadow fell, at first so faint, it was scarcely noticed. But week by week its darkness grew, until at last it threw its mantle of gloom over the happy home. Suspicion ripened into apprehension, apprehension into dread, and dread was supplanted by fearful conviction. The husband no longer loved the sanctuary of God. He forgot the assembling of himself with his people. At first the dereliction from duty was so slight as to be scarcely noticeable. It seemed merely the result of accident, not of intention ; but as the summer advanced, it became more and more apparent, till at last the dread conviction fastened its horrible fangs deep in the writhing heart.

At first the husband would walk down to the village on Sabbath morning, returning in time to accompany his wife to church ; for she still went to hear Mr. Gordon preach, notwithstanding the treatment she had received at his hands ; then she would have to

wait for him a few minutes ; and then he would not come at all, but meet her at the church door perhaps, or enter after services were begun ; and finally he refused to go altogether, preferring to remain at home, or spend the Sabbath morning in the street. This gave Grace the deepest grief, and she used every effort to stay the onward current which she saw was gaining force day by day, and which she knew, unless it could be stayed, would steal away in its course her happiness and hope. She did not reproach him ; no, no, her words were ever kind ; but her earnest, pleading look, and her soft tones of love, and gentle intimations could not be misunderstood by him ; but while he continued to lavish upon her every token of affection, he silently persevered in his neglect of religious duties. The sanctuary of God had become to him an unholy thing.

How her heart was bowed within her, beneath the weight of the crushing burden ! The waters of sorrow had come up into her soul, and she was ready to be overwhelmed in their depths. O, how she longed to speak to her husband, to entreat him to turn from his evil ways, but she could not ; the words just ready to be uttered died upon her tongue, and the resolution which she had so firmly fixed, faded out from her heart before the cold indifference of him whom she would have laid down her life to save. How could she unbosom to him her fears, her sorrows ? how tell him he was acting wrong, and must retrace his steps ? She felt that it was her duty to do it, and often the determination to act was formed, but then when the moment came, her woman's nature shrank from the undertaking, and she could only turn aside and weep.

How often is it the case, that we most dread to speak to those nearest and dearest our hearts on the momentous subject of religion. We fear we may say something that will drive them away from Christ, rather than win them to him ; and while the heart is consuming with desire, our tongue is silent. We pray that our lips may be touched with a burning coal off the altar of his love, that we may speak wondrous things out of his holy law, but our faithless petitions bring back no answer from him who sitteth on the throne, and we are made to cry, "How long, O Lord, how long?" And oftentimes we would fain excuse ourselves from the work, because, like Moses of old, we are "slow of speech, and of a slow tongue," forgetting that "I AM THAT I AM" hath sent us to do his will on earth. But is this the only reason why we thus falter in our Master's work ? Let us look deeper into our own hearts, and deal faithfully with our own souls, and see if we should not find the true cause in self-condemnation ? We have not kept our garments white, and ourselves unspotted from the world ! Then how dare we teach by precept, what our daily example condemns ?

Often was Grace on the point of going to her mother, and, unbosoming to her her sorrows, seek her counsel and guidance ; but here again fear overcame her resolution. How could she pour into her mother's ear complaints against her son ? She knew that mother's heart was breaking with grief ; she read it in the sad look, the deep-heaved sigh, the tearful eye. Then would it not be unfeeling, yes, heartless, in her, to give that breaking heart another pang ? No, no ; this she could not, would not do. She would suffer on in silence,

"would hide herself with God until these calamities be over past."

And Mrs. Holmes, too, longed to speak to Grace. But she could not lay the husband's faults and departures from the path of right before the tender-loving heart of the wife, and tell her she was the cause of this change. No, she would not add to that cup, brimming with anguish, another bitter drop.

Thus matters went on through the summer, the grief-cloud ever darkening. The wife and mother hoped and hoped, and prayed, O, so earnestly, each day bending more and more beneath the heavy burden. And now the cloud was very dark, shutting out from their crushed hearts every beam of joy and gladness, and mantling the future horizon with blackness and despair.

At length, one day, old Mr. Holmes, who had chafed and fretted under his trials, and often made known his distress to his wife, asked her if she intended "to let Grace go on in her foolish, obstinate way, and bring their son to ruin?"

"I can not say any thing to her about it, Mr. Holmes; I can not."

"Well, I will then. I'll give her my opinion of her course, and show her that if she continues in it she will bring disgrace and ruin upon all of us."

"But, Mr. Holmes, Grace can not see the matter as you do. She thinks she is acting right, and it will do no good, but only add to her unhappiness."

"Yes, but I'll show her she ain't, and that if she don't give up her silly notions her husband will be lost. It is not going to make her unhappy, I know it won't. Do you think I will see my son go to ruin just because

of her headstrong whims, and not to say a word to her about it? No, that I won't; that I won't. The fact of the business is, I have stood it long enough. I'll go this very evening, now, while John is not at home, and give her my opinion straight up and down; she shan't disgrace my family; I tell you she shan't if I can help it." And the old man seized his hat and took the meadow-path to the cottage.

Reaching there, he entered the door of Grace's room unannounced, and stood in her presence before she was aware that he was on the premises. She was surprised to see him, for he had never before come when her husband was from home, and she very well knew that the old man was aware of his absence. She hastily laid aside the Bible which she had been reading, and handed him a chair. Traces of tears were on her face, but she assumed as cheerful an expression as she could, and asked for her mother and Fannie. The old man's voice was hoarse with excitement as he answered:

"They are well."

"I am sorry Mr. Holmes is not at home to-day," said Grace, by way of continuing the conversation, and giving the old man an opportunity to make known his business. She knew his restless manner and frowning countenance betokened something very unusual, and she wished to open a way to the subject of his visit.

The old man made no answer, but knitting his brow more deeply, kept his eye sternly fixed on the embers smoldering on the hearth.

"I am afraid he will not be at home before night," she paused, but the old man made no reply; he only knit his brow more darkly, and gazed more fixedly into

the fire ; "but if you will leave your message with me, I will deliver it to Mr. Holmes when he returns."

"My business is with you, Grace, not with him," said the old man, abruptly turning himself in his chair so as to face the trembling girl.

Grace started at the severe tone in which these words were uttered. The knitting which she had taken up, fell from her hands. Her heart throbbed, her face flushed, her frame shuddered. She looked at him, but spoke not.

After a minute he said, "I have come to talk to you about the course you are pursuing, which is leading your husband and my son to ruin."

"What do you mean, father?" said the astonished girl, leaning for support on the stand by her side.

"I mean just this, that if you don't change your course, you will bring your husband to ruin, and the whole family to disgrace."

"My course! Why, what have I done? what am I doing? tell me, tell me!" and she bent toward him to catch his reply.

"You know well enough, Grace, what you are doing, you needn't ask me," answered the old man, relaxing somewhat the austerity of his brow, and softening slightly the severity of his voice, as he beheld her intense agitation.

"Indeed I don't; I can't see where I have done wrong. I don't know what you mean; do explain yourself, and let me know the worst."

"Well, listen to me, and I will tell you what I mean." And the old man moved uneasily in his chair. "I feel ashamed to have to speak of it, it is such a

disgrace, and has caused us so much trouble, but as you have been the cause of it you can blame nobody but yourself. You know very well that, ever since you have moved from my house, John has been neglecting his duties as a member of the church, and that he has scarcely been to meeting through the whole summer. Now, what is this but ruin to him, and disgrace to the family? And who has done this work but you, with your foolish notions about baptism and communion?"

"And is this what I have done? the great crime you speak of?" and her over-wrought feelings found vent in a flood of tears. "Thank God, this is all," she added, as soon as her deep emotion somewhat subsided.

"All, indeed, and ain't this enough? Could you want the matter any worse than it is? Think of it, Grace, your husband spending his Sabbaths on the streets or at home, instead of going to church, as he should; and last week, you know, he was in a street brawl."

"This is bad, I know it is; but, father, Mr. Holmes was insulted by the man he struck. Shouldn't he have defended himself?"

"John never was guilty of such a thing before in all his life, and now he will have to be brought up before the church, and may be excluded, and then where will he be? and you may thank yourself for it all. If you had come along and joined us, when you were first married, as I wanted you to do, all this wouldn't have happened. I knew how it would be, and told you so, but you wouldn't listen to me, and now you see what has come of it. The fact of the business is, you deserved to be punished for your hard-headedness, and, I hope now that you can see your wrong you will now give it up."

As Grace listened to these words, her woman's spirit triumphed over feeling, and wiping away her tears, she answered in as firm a voice as she could command :

"Sir, I have noticed the change in my husband that you have just spoken of, and it has filled my heart with sorrow ; but I have never thought, and I do not now believe, that my conduct has caused it, or in any way led to it. I have done what I have thought and felt to be right, and my husband has approved my course ; and my conscience does not now tell me that I have acted amiss."

"Who do you think has led John astray, if you haven't ? There is nobody else to do it."

• The tears started afresh at the repeated unkindness, but she wiped them away.

"I have thought, sir, that Mr. Hastings has had a very unhappy influence over Mr. Holmes. You know Mr. Holmes is very fond of his company, and Cousin Ed. has told me that he is an infidel, or at least very skeptical regarding religion."

"Tut, tut, it is no such thing. Hastings has had no hand in the matter at all ; it's just because you don't come with him to the communion-table. Hastings may be an infidel or skeptic, for what I know, but he has never led John astray ; not a bit of it."

"But Cousin Ed. thinks he has, and he certainly ought to know."

"How do you know he thinks so ?"

"He has told me as much several times."

"Not a word of truth in it, not a word ; he just says that because he is a Baptist like you." And the old man became more excited, as he felt that the hope of

bringing Grace to his terms was less sure. "The fact of the business is, it is your own course and nothing else, and now I want you to promise me one thing, and you must do it; and that is, to come to our communion-table, at our next meeting. Say, will you do it?"

Seeing that Grace hesitated, he repeated his words with more emphasis, "Will you promise to do this, Grace? if you don't, your husband is a ruined man."

Grace breathed heavily, and her heart sunk within her. How could she promise to do wrong? For a moment she did not move.

"Say, will you do this?" asked the old man, in a still, hard tone, as if provoked by her hesitation.

She raised her head slowly, and looking at him earnestly, as if to impress upon him the full meaning of her words, replied:

"This, sir, I can not do, and I will not promise. I will not disobey the commands of God to endeavor to bring about what no human effort can accomplish. My husband is in the hands of God, and he will do 'whatsoever seemeth good in his sight.'"

"Then you will not come to the Lord's table to save him from destruction, when you can do it so easy?"

"As I have said, I can not disobey the commands of God."

"Well, then, if you will continue in your obstinate way," said he, stamping his foot, "never come into my presence again." And he seized his hat, and rushed from the room in almost a frenzy of passion.

For a moment Grace was bewildered; she could not realize what had passed. Throwing herself on the

lounge, she sobbed as if her heart would break. Then her pent-up anguish found its way in a torrent of tears. She wept long and bitterly. After her feelings were somewhat calmed by weeping, she endeavored to review the conversation that had just taken place. She felt that she had been falsely accused, insulted, and forbidden her father's house. "Why, O my God, has this great trial come upon me? Have I so deeply sinned? and is this my punishment? if so, thy will be done! and teach me submission to that will; but if thou art trying me in this furnace of affliction, that the dross of my nature may be consumed, O, then impart thy grace to enable me to bear the fiery flame. Surely thou hast filled me with bitterness, and made me drunken with wormwood! Thou hast hid thy face, and I am consumed. O, wherefore hidest thou thy face, in this, my deep trouble? Come, I beseech thee, by thy Holy Spirit, and take from my soul this crushing grief; O, let me not be utterly forsaken!

"Can it be possible," she asked herself, "that these things are so? Have I been the means of my husband's downfall? Can it be that my continued refusal to commune with him has driven him away from the house of God? It may be so, and yet how can it? He has always told me to consult my own conscience; and he has, on several occasions, spoken in my behalf. No, no, it can not be this that has caused him to change his course. Of this I am confident. It must be, as Cousin Ed. has told me, the influence of Mr. Hastings."

This was a gentleman of leisure, and a man of fine intellectual attainments, that had come to Weston in the early spring. From the first, young Mr. Holmes had

been very much pleased with his society, and often, after they went to housekeeping, he would bring him home with him to tea. Grace had been quite struck with his agreeable manner and chaste conversation, and for some time she welcomed his visits with pleasure. But at length she learned to look upon him with distrust, and then with dread, as Mr. Lewis's intimations on several occasions led to a confirmation of her fears respecting his religious belief.

Slowly, but surely, had he poisoned the mind of her husband. Even before they were married, the latent seeds of the Bohun Upas—infidelity—had been dropped into his heart. At first cautiously, by doubting, and then by speaking lightly of the forms and ceremonies of religion, as practiced by our orthodox churches; then by denouncing the keeping of the Sabbath as a day of rest and dedication to God; and then came the denial of the divinity of revelation, and an avowal of an utter contempt of those truths "which make wise unto salvation." When this was declared openly, Mr. Holmes felt shocked, and determined within himself to break with one who treated with scorn the doctrines of that Bible which he had always regarded as sacred. But the victim was ensnared, and escape was impossible. He had been led on, step by step, until now he stood on the very verge of ruin. His father's words to Grace were too true. She knew not the extent of his wandering, for lately he had avoided speaking of religion in her presence, and she could not realize that old Mr. Holmes meant all he said. She regarded it as an exaggerated manner of speaking, consequent upon the excitement of his mind, and his earnestness to win her to his way.

Thus days passed, and at length the time came for Lydia Clarke, Fannie, and Mr. Lewis to make the long-promised visit to Annie Gray. Grace enjoined it upon Lydia to say nothing of her trials to her parents and friends. "It will do no good, Lydia, you know, and will only make them unhappy. Fannie, I am sure, will not mention it, and as I have never written them a word upon the subject, they will never know any thing of it. I hope the day will soon come when this dark cloud will be withdrawn. God will not always let it overshadow me thus. He doth not afflict willingly, Lydia, but for our good, and was daylight will come out of this great darkness."

Lydia looked at her with admiration, as she thus hopefully expressed herself. "Still faithful and believing; God will surely remember you in mercy, dear Grace."

From the time of old Mr. Holmes's conversation with Grace matters had continued to grow worse. The husband soon daily more and more neglectful. Whether the temptations were stronger and more frequent, or whether he had been driven to greater lengths by harsh words from his father, Grace could not tell. She saw him day by day tending toward the dread gulf of infidelity, but she knew not how to arrest his steps: there was a hidden force impelling him onward, but she could not remove it, for she knew not what it was.

Her heart was well-nigh breaking, but she always strove to appear cheerful and happy. She would stifle the rising sigh, drive back the rushing tear, bear up the drooping form; but the very effort had a sadness in it touching to behold. And it might be the sorrow of that sweet face was a reproach to him that he could

not brook. What will not women dare and suffer for those they love ?

Grace was sitting, one evening, a few days after the girls had left for Forest Glen, in her little room alone, for her husband had gone to the village for letters, when her mother opened the door gently and walked in. Grace started from her reverie and handed her a chair, smiling one of her sweet, sad smiles, which was answered by one as sad as hers. As Mrs. Holmes laid aside her bonnet and shawl there was an evident agitation in her manner quite unusual, for she was a very calm woman, and the heart of Grace foreboded the coming evil.

After a few moments, in which neither spoke, Mrs. Holmes asked, in a tremulous voice, for her son.

"He went to town a few minutes ago for the mail."

Her eye met her mother's. Instantly, as if a revelation had been given her, she comprehended the object of her visit.

"You have come to talk to me about him, mother ; I know you have," said the agitated girl, taking a low seat by her scarcely less agitated mother. "Have you any thing bad, O, tell me, tell me ?"

"Nothing but what you know, Grace ; my heart has been bursting these months past to speak to you on this subject, but I have not known how to do it, and this evening I felt I could put it off no longer, so I have come to see if there is any hope of reclaiming my poor son before it is too late."

"O, that it could be done, mother," and she threw her aching head upon her mother's lap, as she sobbed out the scarcely intelligible words. "O, that I could do something to win him back from the paths of sin

and wickedness. I would make any sacrifice, do any thing to save him. Tell me, is there any thing I can do?"

Mrs. Holmes hesitated as she smoothed back the hair from the almost bursting temples; she did not know how to begin. At length she said, "What I am going to speak, Grace, will be painful for you to hear, I know it will; but it is the honest conviction of my heart, and the time has come when I must talk without disguise. I feel that your conduct has much to do with John's fall. Had you taken a different course, things would not have been as they are. I do not say this to reproach you, Grace. I know you have done what you thought to be your duty, but I am convinced you have been mistaken. And I now feel that his reformation depends entirely upon you."

"What have I done, what can I do, tell me? Be it what it may, I will do it. Any thing, any thing, to save my husband!"

"You know, Grace," and her voice grew more calm and earnest, "that ever since you have been married he has appeared indifferent toward his religious duties. Up to that time, from his very cradle, he had been regular in attending church, and his conduct was faultless. But ever since you refused to commune with him, he has seemed to grow more and more careless, and, unless his course is changed, we fear he will soon be involved in hopeless ruin. His father and Mr. Gordon have said every thing they can to him, but it is all of no avail. There is but one thing left to be tried—and this rests with you; and I beseech you to do it."

"I will do any thing I can, mother; but tell me what it is."

"It will be a trial to you, Grace, perhaps, but you ought to be willing to undergo any sacrifice for his good."

"And I am willing, only let me know what I can do, and I will do it."

"Come and join with us, Grace, and thus lead him back to the feet of Christ ; will you do it ?"

Grace buried her head in her mother's lap, but made no reply.

"I entreat you, Grace, to grant this request ; I plead for my son, that he may be saved ;" and the mother grasped convulsively the trembling hand of the daughter. Grace looked up into her face with an expression of fear and astonishment.

"How can I disobey the commands of God to make an experiment which I have no assurance will be successful ? No, no ; I can not do evil that good may come."

"But your husband, Grace, think of him ; think of his being lost to himself and friends. You have said you were willing to do any thing to win him back, and this is the last hope ; and I beseech you to make the trial ; it can do no harm, and may prove his salvation. Promise me you will make the effort before it is too late."

"How can I promise to do what my heart tells me would be wrong ? No, no, I can not sin against my conscience ; I must trust in God and do right. I can not promise you this, mother ; I can not, I can not !" and she buried her face in her mother's lap, and wept aloud.

"Well, then, Grace, tell me that you will think about

it ; that you will endeavor to be reconciled to the step, and will decide before our next sacramental meeting ; tell me this, that I may have some hope."

"I will promise you this, mother—but I can promise nothing more," said she, in broken accents, still resting her head in her mother's lap.

Just then a step was heard at the door, and Mrs. Holmes rose hastily, and took her bonnet and shawl to leave.

"Don't go, mother, it is only Mr. Holmes ;" and the young wife looked pleadingly at her through her falling tears.

"Yes, I must leave, Grace, and I hope you will be enabled to do what is your duty."

Grace wiped away her tears as best she could, and assumed as cheerful an expression as it was possible for her to do. It required a dreadful effort to appear composed and happy, but it must be done ; her husband must not witness her grief.

"Not leaving, mother, so soon ? Stay and hear Fan's letter ; there, Grace, it is to you, read it to mother."

"No, my son, I must go home ; you can run over after awhile and tell me the news ;" and she passed out without looking at him.

"What does Fanny say, Grace ?" he asked, as his wife finished reading.

"She speaks of her pleasant journey, the enjoyment she has had since she reached Forest Glen, of old Father Miller's sermon last Sabbath," etc.

"Read me what she says about the sermon. I should like to hear what she thinks about Baptist preaching ;

I do not know that she ever heard a Baptist sermon in her life before."

" "We went, last Sabbath, to hear Father Miller preach on baptism. Cousin Ed. had made him a visit a few days before, and asked him to preach on this subject. I can not give you his arguments now, sister, but I can tell you they were very strong and very clear. I don't believe they can be met. Cousin Ed. was delighted with the sermon. He says he is an immersionist in toto. And what is better, sister, I believe he is seriously thinking on the subject of religion.' "

" Pshaw, Fan is mistaken ; Ed. is not serious."

" I think he is, Mr. Holmes, and has been for some time."

" I don't believe it. But does Fanny say nothing more about Father Miller ?" She read on :

" "Cousin Ed. has asked him to come to Weston to preach several days for us, and he has promised to do it. I am sorry it is at the time of our meeting, for he can not have our house, and he will have to preach either in the court-house or in that little old Methodist church by the creek.' "

" Is that all she says about Father Miller ?"

" Yes, this is all."

" Well, I will take the letter over for mother to read ; but stop, Grace, what is that little slip of paper in your lap ? It must have fallen out of the letter. What is it, Grace ? it seems to excite you."

" There, read for yourself ;" and she handed it to him, while the tears that had gathered in her eyes rolled down her cheeks.

He then read aloud : " ' Dear sister, what I say to you

here, I wish you to keep secret until I get home. I tell you because I know it will make your heart glad, and you can sympathize with me in my fears. I am going to join the Baptists when I come home, if father will let me. But—”

“Bless de Lord for dat—bless de Lord for dat !”

They both turned instantly ; and there, in the half-open door, stood old Aunt Peggy, with one hand on the knob, and holding in the other a tin cup, which she had brought to get some soda for the biscuit. As she opened the door, the mention of Father Miller’s name had caught her ear, and she wanted to know what was said about the good old gentleman she had so often heard Miss Gracey talk about. When she heard that Fannie had determined to join the Baptists, she could contain herself no longer, but gave vent to her joy.

“Dat’s good news, Miss Gracey, bless de Lord ; didn’t I tell you truth is mighty and will pervail ? Dey’ll all come right arter awhile ; Massa Ed., and you, too, Massa John.”

“What do you say about my getting right, Aunt Peggy ? I am as right as any body now. I don’t believe in all these forms and ceremonies, and different doctrines in religion. These people that call themselves Christians, are always quarreling among themselves about something, and who can tell who are right ? For my part, I believe they are all wrong. I don’t believe God requires any of these things at our hands.”

“O, Massa John, don’t talk so, you skeer me ; don’t you b’leeve in the holy Scriptures ?”

He made no reply, but snatching the letter from the stand, took up his hat and passed out of the door.

Not a word was said after he left. Grace could not speak, and Aunt Peggy did not know what to say ; she had never heard any one talk so before, so she got her soda and quickly went out, and Grace was left alone.

And there she sat, poor stricken girl, her heart bursting with grief. She could not weep, for anguish had dried up the fountain of her tears. She reviewed the few short months of her married life, and what had they brought her but affliction and trial? What a world of trouble she had lived in those few fleeting days. And now the seal of bitterness was set to the sum of her sorrows. Her cup of anguish was overflowing, and drowning out from her once happy heart every ray of hope and gladness. Her husband was an infidel, disregarded the claims of religion, had been engaged in street brawls, and had twice needed the assistance of his friends to get him home safely. And she, perhaps, was the cause of it all. And now what must she do ? to whom could she go for counsel ? Those who could advise her had besought her to pursue a course which she believed would be wrong in the sight of God. And God seemed to have withdrawn the light of his countenance. She mourned without hope.

Thus she sat, gazing into the fire ; her hands clasped with the energy of despair, and her breast heaving beneath the rushing of tumultuous thoughts. What must she do ? This was the question to be decided ; but her throbbing brain could give no answer. And there she had sat for many minutes, her whole attitude expressive of the most intense mental suffering. She started as one awakened from a frightful dream as she felt a hand gently laid on her shoulder.

"What is the matter wid you, Miss Gracey?" and old Aunt Peggy bent over her with the tenderness of the mother over her suffering child, while her countenance was expressive of the deepest compassion and tenderness.

"My husband, Aunt Peggy ; my husband !" and the pent-up anguish found vent in a flood of tears.

"And what of him, Miss Gracey?" said the old woman, softly smoothing back the hair from the aching temples, with her hard old wrinkled hand.

"You heard him say he no longer loves the Bible, and cares nothing for religion. O, I believe my heart will break, Aunt Peggy."

"O, no, Miss Gracey ; it's mighty bad ; trust in de Lord, chile ; God knows I never 'spected to hear him talk so ; it's mighty bad, but we must pray to God to change his heart, and make him to see his sin ; dis is all we poor mortals kin do."

"But, Aunt Peggy, perhaps I have been the cause of all this. His mother and father think I have, and if this is so, what shall I do?"

"How, chile, what do you mean ? how has you done it?"

"By refusing to commune with him, they say ; and they tell me if I would do this, it would now save him from ruin."

"But, Miss Gracey, how could you do dis when in your soul you b'leaves it is wrong?"

"But my husband, Aunt Peggy, ought I not to do any thing for his sake?"

"No, chile, you mus' not do wrong, even for your husband ; an' you knows dis would be wrong."

"But how could this be wrong, Aunt Peggy, if it would save my husband?"

"You thinks all dat communes mus' be baptized, don't you, Miss Gracey?"

"Yes, Aunt Peggy, that I do."

"Well, you don't think dey is baptized, do you?"

"No, no; I can't believe this."

"Well, now, don't you see dat if you goes to de table with dem you tells a lie to God an' de world? Now you ain't a'countable for mas'r John's sin, for you know de Bible says ebery tub mus' stand on its own bottom."

"O, no, Aunt Peggy, the Bible does not say any such thing," and a faint smile passed over the sad face at the old woman's quotation.

"Well, well, it's all de same thing; de Bible says ebery man mus' give a'count of himself unto God. He knows all your troubles, chile, an' he marks all your tears. You mus' pray to him, an' in his own good time he will anser you. You know your God is faithful. 'I once was young, and now am old, but I have never seen the righteous forsaken.' Let dese thoughts console you, an' I will pray wid you dat all things may be made straight."

Grace sat reflecting on the words of consolation which old Aunt Peggy had spoken, after she left the room, and endeavoring to decide what course she should take. Should she follow the advice of her mother, and make the experiment of joining the Presbyterian church, to win back her husband, or should she, as Aunt Peggy had said, wait to see the salvation of the Lord.

She was ready to do any thing that was duty. Like

Mary of old, she would sit at the feet of Jesus, to learn of him, to wash them with her tears, and wipe them with the hair of her head. She was ready to follow wheresoever her Master led.

“The time is short ; the meeting must determine ; three weeks will decide,” said she, as she arose from her seat.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE MINISTER'S VISIT.

IN a few days after the return of the party from "Forest Glen," Mr. Gordon called at old Mr. Holmes's, where he met Mr. Lewis, who was spending the evening socially with the family. This was the first visit the minister had made to "Mount Airy" since Fannie came back. It was very unusual for him to absent himself so long, for he looked upon it as his second home, and was regarded by all as one of the family. Mr. and Mrs. Holmes wondered greatly at his protracted absence, and frequently remarked upon it in Fannie's presence. She divined the cause, but said nothing.

He had been kept away by a mingled feeling of pride and distrust. The communication received by him from Fannie the evening previous to her departure to visit Annie, contained intelligence surprising and disagreeable. It was this that had caused him to act in this unaccountable manner. But just here we must go back a little and explain briefly the relation existing between the young girl and the minister.

Mr. Gordon, as is usual with all young ministers, had been advised by his score of *particular* friends to look him out a help-meet—one who could share with him the

duties and responsibilities of his station. The advice proved very palatable, for he had long entertained the idea that to be thus assisted was, in truth, a part of his duty to himself and to the people of his charge. So now, therefore, as he was fully established in his new home, he gave himself to the work. There were several very estimable young ladies, members of his congregation ; but, alas ! none just suited to the summary of his requisitions. What a terribly fastidious class of society these ministers are ! One was too old—another too young ; one was too gay—another too sedate—not for the judgment of the far-seeing ones of his people—but for the minister's taste. Ministers, like other men, will have their preferences ; and that, too often, despite the judgment of elders and deacons, and the very *apropos* selections of elders' and deacons' wives. Alas ! for human nature.

When Fannie returned from school the Christmas previous to the commencement of our story, her amiable disposition, and gentle, playful manner, heightened in charm by beauty of feature, and the perfect molding of her sylph-like form, soon won the heart of the pastor. His judgment whispered, "she is very young ;" and so she was, having, but a few months before, entered her seventeenth year. He feared that this, with her parents, would be regarded a serious obstacle to their marriage ; but then he could wait till she had attained a suitable age, and this he resolved he would do ; only let the prize be secured : he heeded neither trouble or delay.

Old Mr. and Mrs. Holmes had seen with heartfelt satisfaction, the preference of the pastor for their daughter. They esteemed him very highly, and regarded him in

every way worthy of her love. She was very young, it is true, but not younger than the mother was, when she assumed the responsibilities of a wife. And then her domestic education, without which no young lady, whatever may be her years, is fitted to manage a household, had been carefully attended to.

The letter, to which we alluded in a foregoing chapter, and which had decided Mr. Gordon not to accompany Fannie to "Forest Glen," was written in reply to one in which he had urged her to give him a final answer. It was marked by that candor and feeling which were peculiarly characteristic of her heart. She told him undisguisedly of the nature and extent of her regard for him, and the hopes that had filled her bosom. "But you know, Mr. Gordon," she added, "that my views respecting baptism are now undergoing a change ; what the result will be, I can not say ; but should I become a Baptist, and I now feel that this is very probable, you yourself must see that our marriage would be attended by consequences not only disagreeable, but deleterious to our growth in grace. Above all other considerations, a house should not be divided against itself in religious sentiment. This is a hard trial for me to bear, but my Saviour has said, 'Ye are my friends if ye do whatsoever I have commanded you,' and I dare not disobey, even for the highest worldly consideration. And I now entreat you not to insist on a definite answer until I have decided this momentous matter ; momentous it is, as it regards both my spiritual and temporal welfare. I can say no more. Pray for me, that I may have divine guidance.

Truly yours,

"FANNIE."

The feelings of the young pastor, on reading this note, can not be described. Surprise, disappointment, chagrin, fear, despondency, succeeded each other with fearful rapidity. He was bewildered, and knew not what to think, nor how to act. He had several times heard her express herself doubtfully respecting sprinkling, but he looked upon it only as *doubt*, as fleeting as unfounded, and believed that as soon as judgment should gain the ascendancy over the sympathy which she felt for Grace, her shadowy misgivings would pass away, leaving no trace behind to mark their ephemeral existence.

After much serious reflection, he determined to use his influence through the medium of Mr. and Mrs. Holmes, to prevail upon Grace to partake of the communion at their next meeting. And whenever he had called to see them during Fannie's absence, he had urged upon them to win her to this step. The only reason he assigned was the conduct of her husband ; this, with him, it is true, was a very strong consideration, but further down in his heart was a far more painful one, which he hesitated to give, fearful of the consequences to one whom he loved with his whole heart. He thought that if Grace could be but for once prevailed upon to sacrifice her principle to her love, the matter could then be easily managed with all parties. O, how fervently he prayed "that her prejudice might be removed, that she might be led to come with the people of the Lord to the celebration of his Supper." And when Mrs. Holmes told him that Grace had promised her "to consider the matter and decide before the next sacramental meeting," his heart bounded with unspeakable joy ; he believed that his prayer would yet be an-

swered to him in peace. He felt that, toward Fannie, he must act with the greatest caution.

As the minister entered the family room, conducted by old Mr. Holmes, Fannie, who had been intently engaged listening to her Cousin Ed., while he described to her mother Father Miller's sermon, and its effect upon his judgment, rose, and with agitation, which she vainly endeavored to hide, bade him good-evening, and handed him a chair. He was equally embarrassed, but shaking hands with Mrs. Holmes and Mr. Lewis cordially, and returning her salutation with a polite bow, he took the chair tendered him, and turning to Mr. Lewis, said:

"Do not let me interrupt you, sir, I believe you were speaking of your recent visit. I think I heard the name of Father Miller as I entered the door."

"Yes, I was telling aunt of Father Miller, and of his sermon on baptism, which I heard while I was gone."

"Very fine, I suppose it was."

"To me, exceedingly so; I think it can not be surpassed in convincing argument. It astonished me to see such an old man, and one that we might call uneducated, handle the subject with so much clearness and power. He is coming, in about two weeks, to hold a meeting in our village, and I think you and Uncle Holmes may prepare to throw up your commissions of pastor and elder. Indeed I shall not be much surprised if all of your people go under the water before he leaves;" and Mr. Lewis looked at the pastor quizzically.

A dreadful misgiving seized his heart, but he betrayed no emotion. The words, though so lightly uttered, sounded to him prophetic.

"Tut, tut, Ed., what foolishness, boy. • Do you think sensible folks are going to have their heads turned by this old man? Our people are Presbyterians dyed in the wool; can't turn their heads, you may rest assured of that."

"Well, jesting aside, uncle, I tell you he is very strong and lucid on the subject of baptism. The impression made upon my mind and judgment was wonderful; and I think Cousin Fannie felt as I did. It will not do to let her hear Father Miller very often, unless you are willing she should become a Baptist, for there is danger, I give you my word for it."

"What nonsense you talk, boy; a child of mine join that ignorant, selfish people; it is perfectly *ridiculous*. The fact of the business is, my children have got too much good common sense to do such a disgraceful thing! Why, I'd as soon think that Brother Gordon would be guilty of the foolish act as to believe that one of my family would! No, no, Fannie will never do this;" and the old gentleman cast a meaning look at his daughter, as much as to say, "that's my opinion, do you understand it? now let me hear no more of this thing."

"I am not astonished that any one brought up under Baptist instruction, and accustomed to witness such scenes, should look upon them as right; but that any one, who has been raised a Presbyterian, and has become a member of that church, should ever be willing to submit to immersion, is unaccountable to me, I must confess."

The minister looked at Fannie: She blushed beneath his meaning glance, but returned his look with one

equally fixed and determined. She had somewhat of her father's will, but none of his prejudice.

"The very fact, sir, that those who have been brought up strongly prejudiced against immersion—been taught to regard it as a coarse, vulgar practice, as most Presbyterians do—should be willing to submit to it, is, to me, a very strong argument in its favor. A man must be not only thoroughly convinced of its validity, but, at the same time, deeply impressed with a sense of his duty to yield to a baptism which, from his infancy, he has been led to consider as not only unnecessary, but highly revolting to every feeling of delicate refinement; and which is practiced by those who persist in it merely for lack of better judgment and more information."

"Circumstances may sometimes be such as to influence persons to do that which their judgment can not fully approve, and which, in another situation, they would regard as entirely reprehensible."

"But how do you account for those who, despite all teachings to the contrary, and in the face of the most violent party opposition, submit to this ordinance? You certainly will not call them fanatics; and how dare you call them misled, when your wisest and best men, in all ages, have borne testimony in its favor?"

"It is no such thing, sir," and the old gentleman rose from his chair, and stood in front of Mr. Lewis; "I tell you it is no such thing. Any man that says dipping is right is no Presbyterian; he don't belong to us."

"You have read of Chalmers, I suppose, uncle?"

"Yes, but Chalmers never said dipping people under water was right."

"Hear what he says: 'The original meaning of the

word baptism, is *immersion*, and though we regard it as a point of indifference whether the ordinance so named be performed in this way or by sprinkling, yet we doubt not that the prevalent style of the administration in the apostles' days was by an actual submerging of the whole body under water.' Is not that very strong testimony in favor of immersion?"

"I don't believe Chalmers says any such thing; you are trying to impose upon me, Ed."

"Indeed, uncle, I can show it to you in his lectures on Romans."

"Won't believe it till I see it, Ed. Somebody has told a story on him—put these words into his mouth. Can't believe he said so—too good a Presbyterian to be talking such stuff as that."

"I'll bring you the book, sir, and let you see it for yourself."

"Well, do that, for I tell you I won't believe it unless I see it with my own eyes, for I have no idea he said it. I have never read any thing of the kind. The fact of the business is, you Baptists make our great men say any thing to suit yourselves."

"That would be impossible. Were the Baptists ever so much inclined to forge testimony, which I assure you they would never do, and have never had any need of doing, your Doctors of Divinity are ever on the alert, and such misrepresentations would be easily detected, and readily exposed. You object to the testimony of Chalmers, but there are scores of other Pedit-baptist writers equally reliable and equally explicit."

"I tell you I don't believe a word of it, and won't, till I see it with my own eyes."

“ Well, some evening this week I will bring my book with me, and show you where Calvin, Wall, Archbishops Decker, and Tillotson, Bishop Nicholson, Drs. Doddridge, Barnes, Clarke, Whitefield, Wesley, McKnight, and many others, bear conclusive testimony to the practice of baptism by immersion ; and all of these men were Pede-baptists, and not more favorable to immersion than you, and they did not dare to say, with the light of the Bible, and of history before them, that it was not practiced in the apostles’ time, and not a Bible ordinance.”

“ Well, Mr. Lewis (an epithet the old gentleman always used when provoked with his nephew), if you are going to bring all of your books and arguments to show that dipping is right, I want Brother Gordon to bring his books and arguments to show that it is wrong. I haven’t read much on this subject myself, outside of the Bible, and I can’t argue like some folks, but I know enough for my own use. The fact of the business is, I could never see the sense of any body reading so much for arguments and reasons, when they are as firmly set in their notions as I have always been. What do I want to find out what this man, and that man, and the other says, when I know none of their say-soes can change me ? Why, it would be the foolishhest thing in the world.”

“ Indëed, sir, I think it is a very sensible thing to qualify ourselves so as to be able to give reasons for our belief, and those, too, of the strongest kind.”

“ Well, I’d like to know who could reason any thing stronger for infant baptism than you can find in the Bible. A man must be blind that can’t see that there.”

"There have been a good many blind ones, then, and I am one of the number. But where do you find it?"

"Why, in Lydia's household, and in the jailor's household. You certainly have been reading the Doctors of Divinity a great deal more than you have your Bible, if you haven't learned this, yet."

"I have read both very carefully, and it is only in the Fathers that I find baby sprinkling. My Bible tells me nothing of it."

"Why, don't it distinctly say, that Lydia and her *household* were baptized, and the jailor, and *all his*, straightway? If this don't teach infant baptism, I don't know what could."

"Not so fast, sir, not so fast; there is no mention made of children at all; not the most distant allusion to them. Your baby sprinkling, is wholly an inference, from these instances, and one, too, entirely unsupported by sound common sense, and your conclusion, if it proves any thing at all, proves too much; if it embraces children, it also includes servants and assistants. And if you say there are many households without servants and assistants, I answer you, that there are also many without children. So your proposition proves entirely too much, or nothing at all."

"I have always thought it very strange that these two cases should be brought forward in support of infant baptism," said Mrs. Holmes, speaking for the first time during the discussion; "there are many hundreds of families without children. I know of several myself, and so does Mr. Holmes. There are Mr. and Mrs. Williams, with their four grown sons, and Mr. Dale's family, that moved from Weston last spring, to Mis-

souri: when they left here they took with them six children, all over fifteen ; and Mr. Peter and Mr. Webb, in the old neighborhood, that never had any children. I think we shall have to go back of this to find proof sufficient to establish infant baptism."

"Tut, tut, Jane, are you growing foolish too? are you going to turn Baptist with the rest of them?"

"I was raised a Baptist; I am now a member of the Presbyterian church. I shall wait to hear the discussion before I change again," she answered, pleasantly.

"I want you to do your best, Brother Gordon," said the old man, turning upon the pastor, and speaking with an earnestness and energy which told how momentous he regarded the interests at stake. "I want you to bring your strongest arguments, and prove to every body that our baptism is *found* in the Bible. I want all convinced on the subject of communion, too, so that after our next Quarterly Meeting there will be no more quarreling in my family. The fact of the business is, I am tired to death of it; I can't see why people don't do right without all this parade and trouble."

The mustard seed had been cast into the earth, the leaven hid in the meal. We shall see the results.

"Shall we meet to-morrow evening?" said Mr. Lewis, addressing the pastor.

"I should prefer rather more time for preparation, if you please, Mr. Lewis; I am quite rusty on this subject, having had but little to burnish me since I came to Weston. Suppose we say day after to-morrow evening?"

"Take time enough, Brother Gordon, take time enough to get every thing ready, and then take the field and win the day."

"This is Tuesday—we will meet on Thursday evening, then, with our weapons prepared for the conflict. We shall meet here, I suppose, uncle?"

"Certainly, certainly; I want to hear all of the reasons you Baptists have for your foolish practice. I don't intend to be convinced, mind you, but I just want to hear what you can say."

"I hope the conflict will not be a terrible one," said Fannie, directing her remark to her Cousin Ed. She had not ventured to speak before, since the minister had cast upon her that terrible look.

The conversation now changed to the ordinary topics of the day, and the evening passed pleasantly. Mr. Gordon remained to tea. There were few words interchanged between him and Fannie. She, as much as was consistent with politeness, withdrew from the room. Her feelings were deeply wounded; she regarded Mr. Gordon's remarks as uncalled-for and severe, and intended altogether for her. But she did not suffer herself to dwell upon it. And she dared not contemplate the future, it was so dark, so mysterious, so threatening.

"Thursday evening at six o'clock," said Mr. Gordon, as he took his hat to leave.

"At any hour you choose; let it be six. I would be ready now if I had my books with me; but as uncle is so determined not to believe any thing but what he 'sees with his own eyes,' not willing to take my word for it, I shall have to get John to call for the Doctors

of Divinity, or I shall not be able to have them present to give in their evidence."

Mr. Gordon bade them good-evening, and sought his room in rather an agitated frame of mind. From this time until Thursday evening he gave himself assiduously to his undertaking.

CHAPTER XV.

THE DISCUSSION—HISTORY OF BAPTISM—PLACES MENTIONED IN THE NEW TESTAMENT SCRIPTURES WHERE BAPTISM WAS ADMINISTERED.

THURSDAY evening came, and at an early hour Mr. Lewis was seen with a large book under his arm, and a roll of manuscript notes in the breast-pocket of his coat, wending his way toward Mount Airy. His books had preceded him, under the superintendence of young Mr. Holmes ; and the same courtesy had been extended to the minister, who, in addition to his own library on the subject, had gathered together all the works on baptism that were to be found in the book-cases of his most prominent members. True, they did not amount to a great many after they were all collected. But he had pretty much the substance of what had been written on his side of the question, for each successive volume is, in a great measure, a reflection of what has preceded it.

Old Mr. Holmes was so confident of victory that he had sent a very kind and pressing invitation to Grace to be present on the occasion ; but she preferred to remain at home, and to seek direction of “him who will guide the meek in judgment, and teach them his way.”

Mr. Gordon came in just as the family were seating themselves for supper. Mr. Holmes had grown very uneasy under his delay, which manifested itself in innum-

erable wonderings why he did not come, and his frequent looking out at the window as long as there was light enough to show any one approaching through the avenue. After supper, which was dispatched with rather more than wonted haste, the family assembled in the parlor, where, to the right of the fireplace, in which was burning a bright, cheery wood fire, stood a large table, with the books of both parties piled on either side. The very books had an antagonistic look as they opposed each other with their superscribed fronts of calf-skin and morocco. The controversialists took a seat near their respective weapons of defense. Mr. Holmes sat at his pastor's right hand ; Mrs. Holmes, with the children on either hand, took her position in front of the fire, and Fannie seated herself in the opposite corner from her Cousin Ed., and just where she could see both parties. They were but fully arranged when a knock was heard at the door, and young Mr. Holmes walked in.

"Did your wife come with you, John?" asked the old gentleman, in a tone whose anxiety was evident to all.

"No, sir, she remained at home."

"What was this for, didn't she know that I sent for her?"

"I believe she did ; but she chose to stay at home and read her Bible. I believe she is tired of controversy."

"Determined not to be convinced," muttered the old man between his teeth as he resumed his chair.

All being at length seated, and silence restored, Mr. Holmes said, "Well, I reckon, we had just as well begin ; I see, gentlemen, you are both pretty well prepared. I want you both to do your best, and we will decide which one gains the victory. You must first set-

tle the communion question ; and the fact of the business is, Brother Gordon, you can soon do this ; you can soon show that to refuse to let the Lord's people come to his table, is against Bible teaching, against all Christian feeling, and against all common sense ; it is perfect non——"

"Let me just here ask Mr. Gordon a few questions," said Mr. Lewis, breaking in upon the old gentleman's remarks, "which, I think, will show the true issue of this point of disagreement. I would ask him if he does not believe that the two positive ordinances of the New Testament, baptism and communion, derive their authority and force because they were instituted by Christ, and not because they in themselves possess any moral obligation ?"

"Most undoubtedly I do ; I believe the sacraments are nothing except from their divine institution, but because of their institution by God manifest in the flesh, they are not only binding upon his people, but are the greatest and most proper trial of their obedience and respect to the authority and will of the Institutor."

"I would further ask if you believe there is an established order of succession in these institutions, or do you think, as Mr. Hall has argued, that in some cases, and under certain circumstances, the commonly received order of succession may be set aside ?"

"No ; I disagree with your Doctor, here, but deem him most excellent authority for those that can subscribe to his doctrine on this point."

The minister remembered that he had used this very argument in the most expert manner with Grace, to induce her to commune with his church.

"Do you admit, then, that baptism should always—in every instance—precede communion?"

"I not only admit it, but contend for it ; and this is the practice of our church. With us, no one comes to the Lord's Table without having previously been baptized, either in infancy or on a profession of faith."

"Uncle, do you believe, with Mr. Gordon, that no one has a right to a seat at the Lord's Table but those who have submitted to baptism?"

"Yes, I do ; but I want you to understand that I think those have been baptized who have been sprinkled or poured upon, and that, at any time in their lives, whether it was when they were babies, or after they were grown."

"Certainly ; I know this is your belief. I only wish to ascertain if you think that baptism must always go before communion?"

"To be sure I do ; what is the use of asking such a question ? Don't every sensible body think this way?"

"Well, I discover we are all fully agreed on this point, and the only difference between us now, is the subject of baptism."

"I would remark here, that I think the mode of baptism, or, in other words, what is baptism, rests entirely with the believer's conscience," interposed Mr. Gordon, feeling that he had admitted enough to reduce the controversy to baptism alone ; "if an individual believes fully that he has been baptized according to the command of Christ, I think we have no right to call in question his claim to a seat among the followers of Christ at his own Table."

"Yes, and that's my notion, too ; don't the Bible

say, 'Let a man examine himself, and so let him eat?' and I say that we do not dare to refuse to let any body come, who has done all that he believes is required of him."

"If we leave it entirely with a man's conscience, we would have to admit him whether he has been baptized or not, if he should claim communion at our hands, and should tell us that he had diligently studied the Bible, and found that water baptism was wholly unnecessary—that the language employed referred entirely to the baptism of the Spirit, which he felt he had received, and he now desired to obey the command of Christ which shows forth his death till he come; you can not deny that this man is conscientious in his belief, and yet you would not give the elements to him."

"Most assuredly not; we know that he has not submitted to that ordinance of Christ, which is always pre-requisite to a participation in that rite which he commanded should follow."

"And yet this man is conscientious. And even if we admit that it ought to be left to the conscience, this would not in the least heal the breach now existing between your denomination and the Baptists; for Baptists *conscientiously* believe that you have never been baptized, and therefore can not go to the Table with you; neither ask you to come to the Table with them; they would be setting aside the express authority of God, and thereby sin against light and knowledge for the sake of promoting what some call Christian fellowship; or, in other words, they would disobey God to advance, what they contend, is error. And whenever a Presbyterian asks a well-informed Baptist to commune with him, he

certainly asks him to disobey God, in acting contrary to the dictates of his conscience. He should first endeavor to convince him of his supposed error ; and if he can succeed in this, then, and not till then, has he any right to urge upon him this so-called manifestation of Christian fellowship."

"I assent to your proposition, that if a man believes immersion alone is baptism, he can not, and ought not to commune with those he regards as unbaptized. But does it not savor of presumption and arrogance in them to think that *they* and *they alone*, are right on this subject, when so many wise and learned men, in all ages, have borne testimony against them ?"

"Let us to the testimony of these wise and learned men of all ages, and see what they say about the mode of baptism, and the meaning of the word *baptizo*, which has not been translated from the Greek, but transferred, with an English termination. We will first take the history of the *mode*, and I will produce my authorities from the time of Hermes, who wrote A. D. 95, down to the present ; and I think that, in all ages of the Church, you will find that immersion was recognized as that action which was performed by John on the body of the Saviour, and that this was the universally received acceptance of the term *baptizo* ; and, with a few exceptions, of which we will speak, and in which pouring or sprinkling was resorted to because of real or pretended inability, that the whole world practiced immersion for full thirteen centuries. Let me read you from these notes I have made, in order to save time in looking out the passages, and if you are not convinced that immersion was the mode practiced by the

apostles and early churches, I shall be very much mistaken.

“The first instance of pouring on record is that of Novatian, which took place about the year 251. I will read the account of Eusebius, the father of ecclesiastical historians, who says, with regard to this case, ‘that Novatian fell into a grievous distemper, and it being supposed that he would die immediately, he received *baptism*, being besprinkled with water on the bed whereon he lay (*if that can be termed baptism*).’* And here is a quotation from the *Edinburg Encyclopedia*, which says :

“‘The *first* law for sprinkling,’ mark it, the *first* law, ‘was in the following manner : Pope Stephen II. being driven from Rome by Adolphus, king of the Lombards, in 753, fled to Pepin, who, a short time before, had usurped the crown of France. While he remained there, the monks of Cressy, in Brittany, consulted him whether, in cases of necessity, baptism poured on the head of the infant would be lawful ; Stephen replied that it would ; but though the truth of this fact be allowed—which, however, some Catholics deny—yet pouring or sprinkling was admitted only in *cases of necessity*. It was not till the year 1311 that the Legislature, in a Council held at Ravenna, declared immersion or sprinkling to be indifferent. In Scotland, however, sprinkling was never practiced in ordinary cases till after the Ref-

* “This baptism was thought imperfect and not solemn, for several reasons. Also, they who were thus baptized, were called ever afterward *clinici* ; and by the 12th canon of the Council of Neocæsarea these *clinici* were prohibited the priesthood.”—*Eusebius*.

This Council was held 64 years after this case of sprinkling occurred.

ormation (about the middle of the sixteenth century). From Scotland it made its way into England in the reign of Elizabeth, but was not authorized in the Established Church.'

"And here is a short extract from the *Manuel ad Usum Savum*, printed in 1530, which orders that 'the priest baptize him (the candidate) by *dipping* him in the water thrice.' The Common Prayer Book of Edward VI., 1549, decrees that the priest shall '*dip it in the water thrice.*'

"Dr. Wall, who can not be regarded as in any way favorable to immersion, being himself a Pedo-baptist, gives the following account of sprinkling in his 'History of Infant Baptism : ' 'It being allowed to weak children, though strong enough to be brought to church to be baptized by infusion, many ladies and gentlemen first, and then by degrees the common people, would obtain the favor of the priest to have their children pass for weak children, too tender to endure dipping in the water. And another thing that had a greater influence than this, was, that many of our English divines and other people had, during Queen Mary's bloody reign, fled into Germany and Switzerland ; and coming back they brought with them a great love to the customs of those Protestant churches wherein they had sojourned ; and especially the authority of Calvin, and the rules which he had established at Geneva, had a mighty influence on a great number of our people about that time. Now, Calvin had drawn up for the use of his church at Geneva, a form of administering the sacraments, where, when he comes to order the act of baptizing, he words it thus : " then the minis-

ter of baptism pours water on the head of the infant saying, I baptize thee.”’

“We have looked a little at the history of sprinkling, Mr. Gordon, and have found its beginning and progress : we will now turn our attention to the history of baptism. I shall go back as far as the testimony of Hermes, who wrote, as I have said, about the year 95. Speaking of baptism, he says : ‘Before man receiveth the name of the Son of God, he is ordained to death ; but when he receives that seal, he is freed from death, and delivered unto life ; now, that seal is water, *into* which men *descend*, under an obligation to death, but *ascend out* of it, being appointed unto life.’ I will read you the testimony of some of the most learned men and best historians the world has ever known. I have arranged them here on these slips of paper, to obviate the necessity of again looking them out. I suppose you will regard them credible witnesses. Should I mention any name to which you object, you are at liberty to question his authority.”

“Certainly, certainly.”

“I will now read from one whose authority none can dispute. Justin Martyr, who, about the year 140, wrote ‘An Apology for Christians, addressed unto the Emperor, the Senate, and People of Rome,’ after speaking of those who were ‘*persuaded and do believe* that these things taught by us are true, and do promise to live according to them,’ says, ‘they bring them to some place where there is water, and they are baptized by the same way of baptism by which we were baptized ; for they are washed (*en to udati*) in the water, in the name of

God the Father, Lord of all things, and of our Saviour Jesus Christ, and of the Holy Spirit.'

"Tertullian, who wrote 204 : 'Because the person (to be baptized) is let down into the water, and with a few words said, is dipped.' And afterward, speaking of the vain anxiety of some to be baptized in the Jordan : 'There is no difference, whether one is washed in a sea, or in a pool ; in a river, or in a fountain ; nor is there any difference between those whom John dipped in the Jordan and those whom Peter dipped in the Tiber.' He also uses the words, '*in aqua mergimur*'—'we are immersed in the water.'

"Gregory Nazianzen, who wrote a century and a half afterward, or about the year 360, says : 'We are *buried* with Christ *by baptism*, that we may also rise again with him ; we descend with him that we also be lifted up with him ; we ascend with him that we also may be glorified with him.'

"Cyril, of Jerusalem, who had every means of obtaining information, and who wrote A. D. 398, gives this witness : 'As he who, *plunged* in the water and *baptized*, is encompassed by the water on every side ; so they that are *baptized* by the Spirit are *also wholly covered all over*.'

"Chrysostom, twenty-four years later, speaks thus : 'To be baptized and plunged, and then to emerge or rise again, is a symbol of our descent into the grave, and our ascent out of it ; and therefore Paul calls baptism a burial.'

"Is not this explicit language ? But hear what Witsius and G. J. Vossius say, which is still more to the point. They use the following conclusive language :

“ Witsius : ‘ It is certain that both John the Baptist and the disciples of Christ ordinarily practiced *immersion* ; whose example was followed by the ancient church.’

“ G. J. Vossius, the learned philologist : ‘ That the apostles immersed whom they baptized, there is no doubt ; and that the ancient church followed, is very clearly evinced by innumerable testimonies of the Fathers.’

“ Clement, of Alexandria, who wrote about the beginning of the third century, addressing the baptized, says : ‘ You were led to a bath, as Christ was conveyed to a sepulcher, and were thrice *immersed*, to signify Christ’s three days’ burial.’

“ Bishop Bossuet : ‘ We are able to make it appear by the acts of Councils, and by the ancient rituals, that for thirteen hundred years baptism was thus (by immersion) administered throughout the whole church, as far as possible.’

“ Calvin, whom all Presbyterians regard highly orthodox in all points, commenting upon John, iii. 23, and Acts, viii. 38, says : ‘ From these words it may be inferred that baptism was administered by John and Christ by plunging the body under water.’ This testimony from the father of Presbyterians, should certainly have weight with them.

“ Whitefield, in one of his sermons, speaks thus : ‘ It is certain, in the words of our text, there is an allusion to the manner of baptism, which was by *immersion*, which our own church allows ; and insists upon it, that children should be *immersed* in water, unless those that bring the children to be baptized, assure the minister that they can not bear the *plunging*.’

“Augusti, as quoted by Moses Stuart, in *Biblical Repository*, page 359, says, in speaking of immersion : ‘I know of *no* usage of ancient times, which seems to be more clearly and certainly made out. I can not see how it is possible for any candid man, who examines the subject, to deny this.’

“There is, perhaps, no authority superior to the following from Beza ; who, in an exposition of Mark, vii. 4, uses this language : ‘Christ commanded us to be baptized ; by which word *it is certain immersion* is signified ; *to be baptized in water, signifies no other than to be immersed in water.*’

“Grotius : ‘That baptism used to be performed by *immersion, and not pouring*, appears both from the proper signification of the word and the places chosen for the administration of the rite (John, iii. 23 ; Acts, viii. 38) ; and also from the many allusions of the apostles, which *can not* be referred to sprinkling.’

“What do you think of such testimony as this, uncle ?” asked Mr. Lewis, as he observed his uncle moving uneasily in his chair.

“O, how do I know you are reading right, Ed. ? how can I tell but what you are making it up as you go ? I think it is time you were letting Brother Gordon read some now ; you won’t get through to-night with your Fathers and bishops.”

“I thought you liked the Fathers, uncle ?”

“So I do when they have got sense enough to know what baptism is.”

“You don’t object, Mr. Gordon, to any evidence I have produced ?”

"No, sir : they are reliable," replied the minister, in rather a constrained voice.

"I will read but a few more, uncle, though I have a perfect score here."

"Well, make haste and get through."

The old gentleman's uneasiness was very palpable ; he was beginning to have apprehensions of the result.

"Dr. Wall not only gives us the history of *sprinkling*, but furnishes evidence in favor of immersion, as the original mode of baptism. Hear what he says : ' Their (the primitive Christians') general and ordinary way was to baptize by immersion, or dipping the person, whether it were an infant, or grown man or woman, into the water. This is so plain and clear by an infinite number of passages, that as we can not but pity the weak endeavors of such Pedit-baptists as would maintain the negative of it ; so, also, we ought to disown and show a dislike of the *profane scoffs* which some people give to English anti-Pedit-baptists, merely for their use of dipping. It was, in all probability, the way by which our blessed Saviour, and *for certain was the most usual and ordinary way* by which the ancient Christians did receive their baptism. It is plain that the ordinary and general practice of St. John, the apostles, and the primitive church, was to baptize by *putting the person into the water*, or causing him to go into the water. We should not know by these accounts (John, iii. 23 ; Mark, i. 5 ; Acts, viii. 38) whether the whole body of the baptized were put under water, head and all, were it not for two later proofs, which seem to me *to put it out of the question*. One : St. Paul does twice, in an allusive way of speaking, call baptism a *burial* ; which allusion is not so proper if we

conceive them to have gone into the water only up to the arm-pits, etc., as it is if their whole body were immersed. The other : the custom of the near succeeding times.' Now listen, uncle, to what he further says : ' As for *sprinkling*, I say, as Mr. Blake, at its first coming up in England, *let them defend it who use it.*' "

" Well, Ed., I should like to know, if he believed so strong in dipping, why he didn't practice it ?"

" I suppose, uncle, he believed with Calvin, ' that by ALTERING the *mode* they lost none of the substance,' and perhaps like you he thought it was an *indecent thing*."

" Yes, yes ; and he was sensible for that ;" and the old gentleman rubbed his hands together very self-complacently, as much as to say, " I knew all smart men would think like me."

" I will now give you the testimony of Mosheim and two or three others, who have made ecclesiastical history the study of their lives, and whose statements we can not call in question. Listen, uncle, to this, and see what you think of it. Mosheim, speaking of the first century, uses the following unmistakable language : ' The sacrament of baptism was administered in this century, without the public assemblies, in places appointed and prepared for the purpose, and was performed by *immersion* of the whole body in the baptismal font.' And, again : ' Those adult persons that desire to be baptized, receive the sacrament of baptism according to the *ancient and primitive manner of celebrating that institution*, even by IMMERSION.' What do you think of that ?"

" Well, it may be so, and it may not ; how can I tell ? And what if it is, does this prove dipping ? What do you say, Brother Gordon ?"

“ Mr. Lewis’s testimony can not be controverted ; and if we are to be governed by this evidence alone, aside from any other consideration, we should have to yield our point that immersion is not the only mode, and give up our baptism. But we will hear Mr. Lewis through.”

“ Yes, yes.”

“ Bishop Taylor uses this forcible language : ‘ *The custom of the ancient churches was not sprinkling but immersion ; in pursuance of the sense of the word (baptize) in the commandment and example of our blessed Saviour. Now this was of so sacred account in their esteem, that they did not think it lawful to receive him into the clergy who had been only sprinkled in his baptism, as we learn from the epistle of Cornelius to Fabius of Antioch.*’

“ Dr. Neander, of whom we all know, in his letter to Mr. Judd, observes : ‘ As to your questions on the original rite of baptism, *there can be no doubt whatever that in the primitive times it was performed by immersion, to signify a complete immersion into the new principle of the divine life, which was to be imparted by the Messiah.*’ And in his ‘ History of the Christian Religion,’ he says : ‘ Baptism was originally administered by *immersion* ; and many of the comparisons of St. Paul allude to this form of its administration ; the immersion is a symbol of death, of being buried with Christ. The coming forth from the water is a symbol of the resurrection with Christ ; and both taken together, represent the second birth, the death of the old man, and a resurrection to a new life. An exception was made *only* in the case of sick persons, which was *necessary*, and they received baptism by sprinkling.’

"Professor Stuart says : 'The mode of baptism by immersion, the oriental church has *always* continued to preserve, even down to the present time.'

"Bower, Reeves, Professor Campbell, and Stackhouse, all bear the same evidence, that the practice of the apostolic and primitive churches was '*baptism by immersion.*'"

"But where is your proof from Chalmers, Ed. ? you haven't mentioned his name. You found yourself mistaken about him, didn't you ? These other men you have been reading from, I don't know much about ; but I know Chalmers was a Presbyterian, and a good one, too."

"And learned, I suppose you will admit, uncle ?"

"Yes, indeed, that he was. I have never seen much he wrote, but everybody says he was a fine scholar, and I believe it. Don't you think he was, Brother Gordon ?"

"Most undoubtedly, Brother Holmes, he was a great man."

"I am very glad you mentioned him, uncle. Here are his own words ; you can examine the book after I have read, and convince yourself there was no mistake about it. In his lecture on the sixth chapter of Romans and fourth verse, he says : 'The original meaning of baptism is *immersion* ; and though *we* regard it as a point of *indifferency* whether the ordinance so named be performed in this way, or by sprinkling ; yet we doubt not that the prevalent style of administration in the apostles' days was by an *actual submersion of the whole body under water.*' Now, what do you think of that ? Here is the book : examine it for yourself."

The old gentleman took the book, looked at the title-page, and then read for himself the startling words. He could scarcely believe the evidences of his own senses ; he knit his brow, and read a second time to see if it was just as Mr. Lewis had said ; then looking up in the most incredulous manner, exclaimed :

“ Did Chalmers write this, Brother Gordon, and do you think he believed it ? ”

“ Yes, he most certainly wrote it, and I have no reason to doubt these being his sentiments.”

“ Well, then, he wasn’t a good Presbyterian ; ” and the old gentleman threw the book on the table, as if he feared contamination from its touch. “ I won’t claim any man that will say such a thing as that, I don’t care how learned he is. You don’t believe it, do you ? you don’t think the apostles dipped people under water, do you ? ”

“ I must admit, with Chalmers, sir, that the *usual* mode in primitive times was immersion ; for I can not gainsay such testimony as Mr. Lewis has produced to establish this point. But that it was the *only* mode, I can not believe, from the accounts given in the Bible itself. We will pass over the baptism of Christ, for that will more properly come under the *design* of baptism, and review the statement given by Luke, on the day of Pentecost.”

“ I regard our Saviour’s baptism very much in point, Mr. Gordon, if we are now to turn our attention to the instances of baptism in the New Testament.”

“ But we will leave this one for the present,” said the minister, not wishing to take up this very decided proof in favor of immersion in the beginning of his refuta-

tion. "Let this come under some other head, Mr. Lewis, the meaning of the word *baptizo*.

"If you prefer it, let it be so, but it must not be passed over in silence. The language is too plain in favor of my position, for me to be willing to have it remain unnoticed."

"Yes, we can take it up again, but now let us notice the occurrence I have just mentioned. I will read you the most important points," and the minister took from his side-pocket a small clasped Bible, and immediately turned to the second chapter of Acts, which it was evident he had marked for ready reference. A sheet of note-paper, closely written, fell from the place as he found it. This he held in his hand while he read verses 14, 15, 38, and 41. "But Peter, standing up with the eleven, lifted up his voice, and said unto them, 'Ye men of Judea, and all ye that dwell at Jerusalem, be this known unto you, and hearken to my words: for these are not drunken, as ye suppose, seeing it is but the third hour of the day.' Then Peter said unto them, 'Repent, and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.' Then they that gladly received his word were baptized; *and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls.*"

"Well, Mr. Gordon, what are your objections to Peter's statement, as testimony in favor of immersion?"

"Why, I can't conceive how it was possible for so many to be baptized by immersion in so short a time, for we learn that it was the third hour, or, according to our time, nine o'clock, when the marvels of that re-

markable day began to attract attention. Now, if we allow sufficient time for the sermon, the praying and singing, and the preparation for the baptism, provided it was immersion, it must have been the afternoon before the candidates were ready. There were three thousand added to the church, and we presume they were all baptized; and if this was done by immersion, it is *impossible* that they could have gone through with this great number during the remainder of the evening, as there were only twelve administrators.

"Let me see," said he, referring to his paper, and reading, "that would be two hundred and fifty; and, assigning one minute to each candidate, it would have required four hours and ten minutes to have completed their task; and I can not think any man's strength would be sufficient to have performed such a labor, standing all the while in the water. And there is yet another difficulty: it was about the latter part of the month of May, a very dry time in Palestine, and the brook Kedron was dry, except during the rainy season; and we know of no other brooks of sufficient size; and although there might have been baths suitable, yet would the Jews have permitted the use of them to the followers of the despised Jesus, whom they had crucified? Some writer remarks, and I think very justly, 'that they would sooner have opened their baths to the swine, than to those who preached the authority of the hated Nazarene.' In view of all these difficulties, I deem it *impossible*, Mr. Lewis, that *the multitude could have been immersed.*"

"That's a fact, that's a fact, Brother Gordon; it couldn't have been done."

At this juncture Fannie and her mother both laid aside their knitting, and gazed on the combatants with the most marked earnestness. The flush on Fannie's cheek told the deep interest she felt in what was passing, while Mrs. Holmes's composure as plainly spoke her determination to hear the matter through impartially; young Mr. Holmes was also a silent listener. The old gentleman was so excited that he drew his chair round in front of the table between the disputants, while the children, tired almost to death with being still, improved this moment of general movement to obtain permission from their mother to go to her room and play with Damond and Milley.

"Come, Ed., come, how are you going to get over that, my boy?" and the old gentleman's eyes sparkled with the delight he felt at his nephew's supposed defeat. "That's a poser, Brother Gordon; I don't think Baptists can wade through that," added the old man, facetiously, at the same time slapping the pastor on the knee. "Come, come, let us hear what you have to say, Ed., upon this point."

"Well, well, uncle, I do not regard this as an insuperable objection to my position, or that we shall have to take too much for granted in proving immersion from it. If you will observe, it is not said that three thousand were baptized, but—"

"Yes, it does say that three thousand were baptized, and added to the church. Come, mind how you talk. The fact of the business is, you mustn't get along so fast."

"Listen, uncle, while I read the statement. Will you pass me your Bible, Mr. Gordon, if you please?"

‘Then they that gladly received his word *were baptized.*’ Mark this, they *were baptized that gladly received the word*; then the apostle says, ‘and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls.’ You see it does not say three thousand were baptized, but that they were baptized that gladly received Peter’s word. This was the first public appearance of the church in an organized capacity, you will remember, and it is very reasonable to suppose that many of the three thousand who were admitted to the church that day had been previously baptized by John, or the disciples during Christ’s stay on earth, for it is said here in the first verse of this chapter that ‘they were all with one accord in one place,’ no doubt referring to the mass of those who had believed in Christ, and had been baptized.

“But admitting that this great number were baptized in that day, there is yet no improbability that they were all *immersed*. It does not say that they were baptized by the apostles alone; indeed it does not state that the apostles baptized at all on that occasion, though we suppose they did. And as they were *all* with one accord in the same place, there is nothing at all in the statement, or any inference to be drawn from it, to forbid the conclusion that the seventy whom Christ had sent out two by two were present and took part in the administration of the ordinance; so—”

“But *they* had no right to baptize, had they?”

“Most undoubtedly they had. They had been sent by Christ as laborers ‘into every city and place, whither he himself would come.’ And you remember that Peter ‘commanded’ that Cornelius should be baptized, and

Paul, who was instrumental in the conversion of scores, baptized very few, I suppose; so you see that, with their assistance, what an easy matter it was for the twelve to baptize, I mean immerse, even the three thousand, for if you will make a calculation you will find that instead of two hundred and fifty, there were only about thirty-eight candidates apiece—a number that could have been baptized in a few minutes.”

“But then they had no water; didn’t Brother Gordon tell you that all the brooks were dry, and the Jews would not let them use their baths?”

“Dr. Robinson, who has traveled extensively in the Holy Land, and had every opportunity for forming a correct judgment, in his work on Palestine occupies nineteen pages describing the great supply of water in Jerusalem. His authority no one will doubt who is acquainted with his character. The number and extent of the cisterns and reservoirs for water, and the fountains and pools which were everywhere to be found, struck him with amazement. He observed that in the numerous sieges to which Jerusalem has been exposed in all ages, we nowhere read of a want of water within the city. Isn’t this a pretty strong argument against your brother’s assertion, Mr. Gordon? You remember, uncle, that the Pool of Siloam was just without the city on one side; on the opposite side, and just without the walls, were the Upper and Lower Fountains of Gihon. In one end of the city was the Lower Fish-pool, and very near the temple was the Pool of Bethesda; while in the other end of the city we find the Pool of Bathsheba, and the King’s Fish-pools. All of these are mentioned in the Bible; and there were

doubtless many others equally large, and affording every facility for immersion of which we now have no knowledge. As to the remark of your Pedit-baptist friend with regard to the baths, I would just say that instead of the disciples being looked upon with more contempt than swine, the apostle himself tells us here in the forty-seventh verse of this second chapter of Acts, that they continued 'praising God, and having favor with all the people.' "

Old Mr. Holmes hung his head as Mr. Lewis finished. He felt that if immersion could not be fully proved from this history, it was at least probable in the case, while the inferential arguments for sprinkling rested on a sandy foundation. Mr. Gordon, who saw that candor "was the better part of valor" with him, after a few moments' pause, which no one seemed inclined to interrupt, remarked,

"While you have not proved *immersion* from this record of baptism, Mr. Lewis, I admit that you have done away with what have heretofore been serious objections in my mind to even the possibility of baptism by immersion. But as you have used inference to establish your position, though not more than we are compelled to do in support of our views, we will leave this and turn our attention to other instances mentioned by Luke."

"It is very true, sir, that I can not prove *immersion* from the *facts* given in this case ; this can only be done by ascertaining the signification of the word *baptized*. But while I am unable to draw immersion from the circumstances given, I am glad that I can so conclusively prevent inferential sprinkling. But we will turn

to the baptism of the eunuch by Philip. I believe that comes next in order?"

"Yes, and here I think you will find it rather difficult to sustain your ground, though at first reading it appears so favorable to your position."

"I apprehend no trouble, sir; it appears to me very clear."

"I think there are here insuperable objections to baptism by immersion."

"No doubt of it, Brother Gordon, no doubt of it! Show them to Ed., and let him see what they are. He is determined to find nothing but dipping, everywhere;" and the old gentleman looked happy in the thought, that at least the minister could defend himself.

"I will admit, Mr. Lewis," said the minister, resuming the argument, "that from a cursory reading of the text, one might suppose, that they at least went *down into the water*, and *came up out of the water*, and thus far the description countenances your view."

"Why, it expressly says, '*they went down both into the water*,' and '*when they were come up out of the water*,' could language be plainer than this?"

"It appears very plain, I concede; but let me read you Professor Ripley's remark on Matt. iii. 16, which will show you that you must not rely too much on these prepositions. He says: '*Out of the water*—the preposition here translated *out of*, has the more general signification of the word *from*; and would be suitable, whether the sacred writer meant to say that Jesus came *out from* the water, *i. e.*, from within the river to the shore; or that he came *from* the water, *i. e.*, retired from the bank

of the river to another place. This preposition, then, in itself, furnishes no decision in respect to the manner of the ordinance.' This is the concession of an immerser, Mr. Lewis ; what do you think of it ?"

"I think, sir, that, as it regards the support it may give you, it will pass for nothing at all. He says it may mean, coming 'from within the river to the shore,' or, 'coming from the bank of the river to another place.' This is pretty wide latitude, Mr. Gordon, and the indefiniteness might be of service to you in another place, but here it is of no avail, for the preposition '*into*' certainly took them down *into the water*, and in this connection the preposition 'out of' must have brought them out of it, Mr. Ripley's generosity to the contrary notwithstanding."

"But it says they *both* went down into the water ; you don't suppose they were *both* baptized ?"

"Not at all ; this is just what must have taken place in an *immersion*. Had it been a case of *pouring* or *sprinkling*, the eunuch alone could have gone down into the stream, while Philip, standing upon the bank, could have poured from a basin or cup, a little water upon his head. This has sometimes been done by the candidate who, from reading this very text, could not keep out of the water. But here they *both* went down into the water, and *he* (Philip) baptized *him* (the eunuch)."

"But this was a desert country, and we all know that deserts are not supplied with water ; then how could there have been enough for your purpose ? And is it not supposable that the eunuch's mind was directed to make the request of Philip, from the fact that he was reading Isaiah lii. 15, 'He shall *sprinkle* many nations.

Would he have asked for *immersion*, with this passage before his eyes ?”

“Certainly not, certainly not ; any body can see that. You’ll have to give it up, Ed.,” and the old man looked significantly at the pastor, while he slapped his nephew on the shoulder, in the ardor of exultation.

“Hear me, uncle, before you give your final decision. Mr. Gordon must be aware that the term ‘desert’ was applied to those tracts of country which were left uncultivated—to woody, grazing lands—to distinguish them from arable fields, olive-yards, orchards, and gardens, which were inclosed. A writer* of authority says : ‘Some deserts were beautiful, and had good pastures,’ and David, in Psalm lxx., 12th verse, sings of the pastures of the wilderness or ‘desert.’ If but a few drops of water had been necessary, why should the eunuch have waited until they came to water. If it were the desert land that you contend for, Mr. Gordon, do you not suppose he would have been supplied with water to refresh him on his journey ? and surely a few drops could have been spared from the supply to perform this sacred ordinance, if it had been sprinkling. Why should they have waited until they came to water ? If it was the desert country your supporter would have us understand, why should they have any expectation of finding it ? And as to the passage, ‘He shall sprinkle many nations,’ if you had looked carefully into its meaning, you would have found that the word which is rendered ‘*sprinkle*’ should be ‘*astonish*.’ In the Septuagint version, published in Greek, two hundred and eighty-five years before Christ, it is translated *astonish* (*thau-*

* Calmet’s Article on Deserts.

sontai.)* And a more recent writer,† a leading Presbyterian, supported by the learned interpreters, 'Genesius, Rosenmüller, and Martini, gives it the same import. Now, it appears to me, that this instance, when rightly understood, throws great light on the subject under consideration, and that in favor of immersion."

"But there are other instances, Mr. Lewis, that certainly do not support your views. The case of the Philippian jailor, of Saul, of Cornelius, of Lydia."

"I know, Mr. Gordon, the language is not so explicit as here; but the circumstances, I think, are as strong in support of immersion as sprinkling. In these we must rely upon the meaning of the word baptize, for there is no mention made of water in three of these cases. The apostle here says, in speaking of the baptism of Lydia: 'On the Sabbath we went out of the city by a *river side*, where prayer was wont to be made; * * * and a certain woman, named Lydia, heard us, whose heart the Lord opened; * * * and when she was baptized.' This recital is most certainly favorable to immersion. They were not in a '*desert*,' but by the '*river side*.' surely there was no want of water here."

"But what will you do with the Philippian jailor? you can not find any water for him."

"I will do with him just what Luke has done, that is, say he was baptized."

"But you can not argue that he was immersed; all of the circumstances are against such a supposition: they were in prison, and we have no reason to think that there was a sufficiency of water within its walls for

* Hague's Review, page 32.

† Dr. John Brown, of Edinburg.

the purpose of immersion ; and, moreover, it was night, which would prevent their seeking any stream."

"You must concede, Mr. Gordon, that it is more than probable that the Jews, who were so addicted to bathing, would not deny this privilege, I might say *duty*, even to prisoners. Indeed many writers assert that prisons were furnished with baths for the use of the prisoners, and you can very readily conceive that the jailor could be *immersed* in one of these baths. It is certain that they were not in the prison when the baptism was performed, for they were 'brought out,' and then the jailor and his family were baptized ; and after this he took Paul and Silas to his own house. *Where* the baptism was administered we are not told, but we know it was not in the prison, for they (the prisoners) had been '*brought out*,' and it was not in the jailor's house, for after the act was performed, '*he brought them into his house*.' How this favors sprinkling, I can not see. Had this been the mode, would it not have been more convenient and more in accordance with common sense and propriety, for it to have taken place either in the prison or the house ?"

"You can't make dipping out of this, my boy ; so you had just as well give it up."

"Neither can you make sprinkling, uncle. If I can prove that the meaning of the word baptize is immersion, I am sure you will have to admit that they were immersed, as there is nothing in the narrative that forbids the supposition."

"But you can't prove this. Brother Gordon, can't you show him that it means sprinkling and pouring ? I know you can, and then he will see how easy

it was for all the household to be baptized, children and all."

"As it is growing late, Brother Holmes, and we could not possibly get through with this point of the discussion, I think we had better defer it until to-morrow night; we will then take up the meaning of the word, which will decide several passages, and this among the others."

"O, go through with it to-night, I want to see Ed. convinced of his wrong."

"I think, uncle, we must postpone till to-morrow evening; see, it is after ten o'clock, and as it will require some time to produce all the authorities on the meaning of this word, which has been the subject of so much dispute among the different sects, we could not do the subject justice to-night. We will leave our books here, and come early to-morrow evening; and I will see if I can not make this point so clear that even you, uncle, will be forced to admit that immerse is its primary meaning."

"O, tut, tut, Ed.; what foolishness. Do you think I am going to be convinced? Why you might argue a year, boy, and you couldn't turn my head. The fact of the business is, I know what I believe, and the whole world couldn't make me believe any thing else."

"Well, if you are determined to persist in your present opinion, contrary to all proof, I must regard you as hopeless. Perhaps Mr. Gordon, and aunt, and John, and Fannie, will not prove so entirely uncompromising."

"What, Brother Gordon, or your aunt, or my children, turn Baptist? I tell you, if that's your hope, you

had just as well give it up now. That will never come to pass."

"Many strange things take place now-a-days, uncle. Several Pedit-baptist ministers have lately joined the Baptist church ; and Mr. Gordon, like them, may be so thoroughly convinced of his duty as to be compelled to do as they have done. I read in to-day's paper that a Methodist minister, who has been presiding elder in our State, has, within a few weeks past, thrown off the yoke of Conference and the Fathers, and united with the Baptists ; and, if I could now remember, I could give you several instances of Presbyterian ministers coming to the right way."

"Tut, tut ; they were not Presbyterians ; they only called themselves so."

"No doubt your church took great pleasure in recognizing them as such, uncle, until they came out of it ; after that, of course, they were not Presbyterians, but ignorant Baptists."

"But you haven't answered all of Brother Gordon's questions. What will you do with Saul and Cornelius ? Let's hear if you can get water enough for them to be dipped in ; I am sure you can't show that they were dipped ; but I want to see if you can find them a place like you have done for the jailor."

"Here, uncle, let me read to you from this book," said he, taking up "Hinton's History of Baptism ;" "you know Saul was at Damascus when he was baptized. Now this author, who would not assert what he could not prove, says : 'The rivers of Damascus have been celebrated both before and since the days of Naaman, who exhibited his national vanity by insti-

tuting his invidious comparisons between them and the Jordan. They united immediately above the city, through which they ran, affording a full supply of water for its public and private baths, and this was the scene of Paul's baptism.' You see, uncle, that there was enough water here for immersion. Paul was to be baptized, and to wash away his sins. Now let us substitute *wash*, which some of your Pedit-baptist brethren contend is a legitimate meaning of the word, and see how it will read : 'be washed, and wash away thy sins : ' you see what tautology this is ; or let us use Mr. Beecher's meaning, *purify*, and we have 'be purified and wash away thy sins,' which is as absurd as the first rendering."

"Pshaw ! you Baptists always have some way to creep out of your difficulties ; finding rivers, and pools, and fountains, and goodness knows what, where nobody else can. But then the fact of the business is, you can't make any body else see them but yourselves."

"Some persons have a peculiar way of looking to one side, uncle, when we bring them up in view of these rivers and pools, if they are to be used for immersion ; they turn their heads resolutely away, declaring, 'No, no, I can't see any thing but a basin ;' but just tell them that we do not wish to immerse in them, only to use their water for the camels and dromedaries that have brought the people to the river's side to be *sprinkled*, and they suddenly exclaim, 'Yes, yes, I see it now ; what a beautiful river it is.'"

"Tut, tut ; nonsense, boy ; who ever did this?"

"Some persons that I have recently read of, whose names I will not mention. I will leave you to guess whether or not they were Baptists."

"They were not Presbyterians, I am sure. Presbyterians have got more sense than that ; they wouldn't be caught using such a silly reason. But you haven't told us any thing about that other man—Cornelius, I mean. How are you going to get him down into the water?"

"By the word *baptize*. If I can show, to-morrow night, that this word means immerse, and that the apostles so understood it, you will admit that Cornelius went down into the water, even though I can not give you the name of the stream or pool?"

"I sha'n't promise any thing about it. You will see, Brother Gordon, that he does not prove this is the meaning of the word ;" and the old gentleman laid his hand on the minister's shoulder, who had risen to leave, with an expression half commanding, half entreating.

"I will, certainly, do all I can to show that this is not its only signification ; and I think I can succeed."

"Take your seat, Brother Gordon," said Mrs. Holmes, kindly, as she saw the embarrassed manner of the pastor, who evidently felt defeated in the combat.

"No, I thank you. Mr. Lewis is so well posted up, that I shall have to study, in order to be able to meet him ;" and the minister smiled faintly. "The subject of debate to-morrow-night will be 'the meaning of the word baptizo,' and 'the design of baptism,'" said he, turning to Mr. Lewis, who was looking over his books, to select those that he thought he would need.

"Yes ; with a consideration of those texts that allude to the ordinance."

"And I, too, must take with me some of my lexicons and histories."

"Here, Brother Gordon, put them in this handkerchief ;" and the old gentleman drew a most extensive red bandanna from his pocket, and handed it to the minister, who seemed to find great difficulty in selecting the necessary books ; "you may bring it back to-morrow evening."

This was a very generous act for one so illiberal in religious principle, but the old gentleman knew that his pastor was deeply mortified at his opponent's victory. He felt mortified himself, and "a fellow-feeling makes us wondrous kind."

"No, thank you, Brother Holmes ; I will just wrap them up in this newspaper."

Mr. Holmes looked, but could see no vestige of loose paper, except the pastor's notes, which had fallen from his Bible.

"Here, Mr. Gordon, is the Journal," said young Mr. Holmes, approaching him, and taking from his pocket two newspapers. "And, Ed., there is one for you."

"I will take only these two books, John, and I can put them under my arm."

Young Mr. Holmes assisted the pastor to wrap up his books ; and this being done, the gentlemen took their leave ; Mr. Lewis and the pastor to seek their rooms for the purpose of studying much the remainder of the night, Mr. Holmes to report to his wife the progress of the discussion, and to urge her to attend on the following night, in compliance with his father's earnest request.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE CONTROVERSY—SIGNIFICATION OF THE WORD BAPTIZO—DESIGN OF BAPTISM.

At an early hour on Friday evening, old Mr. Holmes proposed to Fannie that a fire should be built in the parlor, as he said, "for Brother Gordon to whip Ed. by." He himself saw that Dick cut the wood, and that Diamond brought it, and placed it on the hearth.

"Have a good fire, Fannie; don't let the room be cold; it will be so unpleasant. See, it is almost sundown, and they will soon be here"—then hastening to the dining-room, he enjoined it upon Mrs. Holmes to have a strong cup of tea in good time. "It won't be long before they come in, wife, and, as the dispute to-night will be a pretty extensive one, Brother Gordon will want to begin early. I wonder if Grace will come with John; what do you think about it?"

"Indeed, I can not say, Mr. Holmes, but I hope she will. You sent a particular request by him for her, did you not?"

"Yes, I told him to be sure and bring her. I want her here to-night, for Brother Gordon is going to use Ed. up completely. I saw him a few minutes ago down the street, and he told me he studied nearly all last night, and has been at it all day. I asked him if he couldn't make matters straight to-night. He laughed,

and said, 'he didn't know,' but I could tell from the way he looked, that all will be right. I'll go and see if Fannie has made her fire yet. I want the room to be warm and comfortable."

He marched out with a quick step and hurried manner, as though he had the weight of government resting on his shoulders, and success depended upon the celerity of his movements.

The fire, kindled by Diamond, was just beginning to burn. He stooped and gave it a few vigorous puffs, and the flame ran from cob to cob, until the promise of a good fire was such as to satisfy even him.

"Here, Fannie, let us bring the sofa up on this side. It will do for you and your mother, and Grace, to sit on, if she comes. Do you think she will?"

"Yes, sir, I suppose she will, but not before tea."

"Well, I'll now help you up with this table of books, and then you can finish, yourself. What a pile there is; but I believe Ed. has got the most. It don't matter, however; I believe Brother Gordon will beat him to-night. Here, Diamond, girl! go and bring your broom, and sweep up this trash you have made. Bring your side up a little nearer, Fannie; there, that will do; that looks very nice, don't it?"

Fannie agreed with her father, that things wore a very cozy, comfortable look.

"You can get through now, without me;" and he put on his hat and passed down the avenue toward the village, to meet Mr. Gordon. Fannie placed the chairs, prepared the lights, and dropped the curtains. "How comfortable it looks," she said to herself, as she took a full survey of the room before going up stairs to change

her dress. "Watch the fire, Diamond ; don't let it pop out and burn the rug."

"No, marm," and Diamond crouched down by the sofa, and, fastening her big black eyes on the fire, as if to awe its dancing, leaping, crackling blazes into good behavior, was soon lost in a reverie, more profound than any ever indulged in by the "bachelor," over his an-thracite.

It was fully a half hour before Mr. Holmes returned with the pastor. In the mean time, Mr. Lewis had arrived, bringing intelligence that Grace would accompany her husband after tea.

"Is supper ready, wife?" asked the old gentleman, bursting into the dining-room, with his hat in his hand. "Brother Gordon and Ed. are both here, and we want to get to work as soon as possible."

The wife wondered what part of "the work" *he* was going to perform, and went quietly about completing her arrangements.

Supper came on in a few minutes, and the tea and biscuit were all that an epicure could desire.

"Ed., you say you are just from John's ; is Grace coming over with him to-night?"

"Yes ; they intend to come over after very early tea. I left her and Aunt Peggy making ready their household matters."

"Is old Peggy coming, too ? What can she tell about Greek and Latin?"

"That is the calculation, sir. But I suppose she intends to confine herself to plain English. I have no idea she expects to step beyond her vernacular in passing her judgment."

As soon as they were seated in the parlor, old Mr. Holmes, eager for the contest, said, "Well, now, let us begin. I reckon you are both ready. If you are not, you ought to be ; for Brother Gordon tells me he has been studying all day, and I expect, Ed., you have been doing the same thing."

"Yes, uncle, I have been making ready, I assure you. It stands as young a soldier as I am in hand to see that his weapons are in fighting order. I have no skill nor prowess to rely upon, only 'my own true blade, and my own right arm.' But shall we not wait until John and Grace come ? and aunt is not in yet."

"She will be here directly ; here she is," said the old gentleman, as the door opened, and Mrs. Holmes walked in with her knitting work in her hand. "I knew you would be in good time, wife ; here, take this rocking-chair in front of the fire," and he stepped across the room and drew up the chair with all the alacrity and gallantry of a youth of seventeen.

But a few minutes had passed, when Mr. Holmes entered.

"Where is Grace, John ? I thought she was coming over to-night," asked the old man, eagerly, as he saw his son unaccompanied.

"She intended to do so, sir, but just as we sat down to supper, Lydia Clarke and James came in, which prevented her ; but see, I have brought her representative," said he, throwing aside his overcoat, and handing old Aunt Peggy, who just then appeared at the parlor door, to the fire. A seat was prepared for her in the corner at the end of the sofa, and just in a position where she could see both parties. Fannie sat on the sofa next

her, young Mr. Holmes on the opposite end, with two of the children between. As we have said, Mrs. Holmes occupied the rocking-chair in front of the fire, Mr. Gordon on her left, at the right of the table, in front of which sat old Mr. Holmes with his back to the fire ; while Mr. Lewis took a chair beside his books, on the opposite side of the table from Mr. Gordon.

"Well, we are all ready now, ain't we?" said old Mr. Holmes, as he looked around on the waiting company. "Who's to begin, Brother Gordon, you or Ed.?"

"As Mr. Lewis is in the affirmative, it rests with him, sir, to open the discussion."

"Why regard me in the affirmative more than yourself, Mr. Gordon? Do you not assert that sprinkling is baptism?"

"I do so believe, but, if I mistake not, you contend that only immersion is baptism ; it now remains for you to substantiate your position."

"This I think I can do, sir, if those present will but have the patience to hear me through. I think I must have convinced you last night that the testimony of Pedobaptist historians goes to prove clearly that in the days of the apostles, and of the earliest churches, baptism was performed by immersion, and I think that in all those instances in the Bible which we considered, I conclusively showed that this mode was at least possible. It now remains for me to prove the meaning of the word baptize ; and if I can establish its signification to be immersion, you must accede to this proposition ; *that wherever, in the New Testament, a command is given to a candidate to be baptized, that command includes the idea of IMMERSION.*"

"Now, Ed., I want you to deal plainly, and not to be reading Greek and Latin, that we know nothing about, and making us believe it is true. The fact of the business is, I want fair play."

"I shall leave it to Mr. Gordon to object to any authority I may produce. I need not resort to any foul means to establish my position, uncle, I assure you. I have sufficient testimony of the most reliable character to witness the truth of my position."

"Well, begin, and let's see if you can make things so clear; I for one know you can't to me—my mind is already made up on the subject, and all the books you could bring in the world couldn't convince me I am wrong. I am determined to live and die a Presbyterian."

"So, uncle, I suppose I may regard you as entirely beyond the pale of conviction. I hope all of my hearers are not so settled in their opinions as to be entirely impervious to testimony. But to begin; I will first read you a few comments on the meaning of the word, by Rev. William Hague, who has been engaged in the baptismal controversy, and who is regarded as a man of ability and candor. He says: 'It is evident at a glance that the turning point in this, the baptismal controversy, is the meaning of the Greek word *baptizo*. The circumstances connected with the administration of the rite, the places chosen, such as Jordan and Enon, the force of the Greek prepositions *eis* and *ek*, which express a descent *into* and a rising up *out of* the water as definitely as any prepositions in the Greek language can do it, are all strongly corroborative of our position, that the act of baptism denoted by the term in Christ's com-

mission, is properly and adequately translated into English by the word *immersion*, which comes from the Latin, or by the word *dipping*, of Anglo-Saxon origin. Nevertheless, if it can be clearly proved, beforehand, that the active verb baptizo, the name of an action, is, when used with reference to water, so indeterminate as not to denote any *particular kind of action*, but rather *all possible modes* of use, of which water is susceptible, from that of a single drop to an ocean, then it follows—now listen, uncle, what he says—‘that however much of doubt the circumstances and prepositions might occasion to tender consciences, the baptismal law from the lips of Christ, contained in the commission, presents a *great variety of modes* to the choice of the individual, or leaves it, as the Pope of Rome would say, to be determined by “*church authority*.”

“‘The main question is; *whether the word used by Christ, to enjoin baptism, in the last exercise of his legislation on earth, in giving that commission which is binding “to the end of the world,” denotes a specific act or not?* If it does not, then there is *no law* which certainly holds us to immersion, or defines what act the Saviour meant, whether it were the application of water to the head or the feet, the face or the hands. If it does, then all objections drawn from supposed difficulties or improbabilities, or from the greater *convenience of sprinkling*, are no more to be regarded as *arguments* than those questions which skeptics sometimes ask in order to throw discredit on the very letter and spirit of revelation.’

“The writer, you see, argues that the action spoken of by Christ, was a determinate one; the ordinance peculiar and positive, not left to the judgment or caprice

of men, but absolutely fixed by him, marked out so that there should be no room for the fancy or preference of man. Now that this determinate act, this positive ordinance was immersion, I will prove from Greek and English lexicographers, from annotators, from encyclopedias, and Pede-baptist reviewers ; and as you object to Latin, uncle, I will read the definitions in English. The first one I shall produce is Scapula, who reaches as far back as 1579. Of *bapto*, the root of *baptizo*, he says it means 'to dip, to immerse, and also to dye ; because that may be done by *immersing*.' You see his third meaning is 'to dye,' because this may be done by immersing.

"Henricus Stephanus, of a few years' earlier date : 'To dip, or immerge, as we dip things for the purpose of dyeing them, or immerge them in water.' Now I wish you all to notice this, for my friend here, Mr. Gordon, will say, after awhile, that one of the meanings of the word is 'to dye.' You see how it is used in this sense, to show that the thing dyed has been *dipped* or *immersed*.

"Schleusner says : 'Properly it signifies, I immerse, I dip, I immerse in water.' It signifies, I wash or cleanse by water, because—hear his reason : 'for the most part a thing *must be dipped or plunged into water that it may be washed*.'

"Roell says : 'Baptism, from *bapto*, signifies *immersion*.' Stokius (Leipsic ed., 1752) is thus full and explicit : 'Baptizo, generally, and by the force of the word, indicates the idea of simply dipping and dyeing ; but *properly* it means to dip or immerse in water.' Of *baptisma*, he says : 'It generally,' that is in a general sense, 'denotes immersion and dyeing ; but by the innate

force of the term, it properly imports *immersion*, or *dipping of a thing in water*, that it may be washed or cleansed. This word is transferred to denote the first sacrament of the New Testament, namely, baptism, in which sacrament those to be baptized were anciently immersed in water, as now-a-days they are only sprinkled, that they may be washed from the pollution of sin,' etc., etc.

"I will now produce some English lexicographers, and you will see that they bear the very same evidence that those Greek and Latin ones have done. Here is Don-negan, who is extensively known in England and America, and ranks deservedly high among recent lexicographers; hear him: '*Baptizo*, to immerse repeatedly into a liquid, to submerge, to *sink thoroughly*, to saturate; *baptismos*—immersion, submersion, the act of washing or bathing; *baptistees*—one who immerses, submerges; *baptisma*—an object immersed, submerged, washed, or soaked.'

"Next hear Bass, an English lexicographer. He gives for the meaning of baptizo in the New Testament, 'to dip, immerse, plunge in water; to be immersed in sufferings or afflictions.'

"Pickering says: '*Baptisma* means immersion, dipping, plunging; metaphorically, misery or calamity, with which one is *overwhelmed*.'

"Greenfield, who is generally known as a most superior New Testament lexicographer, says: '*Baptizo* means to immerse, immerge, submerge, sink; to wash, perform ablution, cleanse, to baptize, and perform the rite of baptism.'

"Dr. Jones, of England, an eminent scholar, defines

bapto : ' I dip, I stain ;' and *baptizo* : ' I plunge, I plunge in water, dip, baptize, busy, overwhelm.'

" Bretschneider, a German scholar of distinction, and, like Greenfield, a most critical lexicographer of the New Testament, uses these strong and pointed words : ' An *entire immersion* belongs to the *nature* of baptism ; this is the *meaning* of the word, for as in *baptizo* is contained the idea of a complete immersion under water, at least so is *baptisma* in the New Testament.'

" And now hear Professor Stuart, of Andover Theological Seminary, and bear in mind that he is a Presbyterian of the deepest dye. These are his words, uttered in the sincerity of belief and candor : ' *Bapto, baptizo*, mean to dip, plunge, or immerse into any liquid ;' and he further says : ' ALL LEXICOGRAPHERS AND CRITICS OF ANY NOTE ARE AGREED IN THIS.' Is not this conclusive ? who can gainsay it ?

" Dr. Robinson, Professor of Sacred Literature in the Andover Theological Seminary, defines *bapto*, ' to dip in, to immerse ;' and illustrates this meaning by John, xiii. 26, where Jesus used the word to designate the dipping of the sop into the dish before giving it to Judas. The second example is from Leviticus, iv. 6, where the Septuagint has this term. It reads thus : ' And the priest shall DIP his finger in the blood, and SPRINKLE of the blood seven times before the Lord ; and shall POUR (ver. 7) all the blood of the bullock at the bottom of the altar.' Here are three different words, *bapto*, *rantizo*, and *ekkeo*, to express the three different actions, *dipping*, *sprinkling*, and *pouring*."

" But, Mr. Lewis," interrupted the minister, who had been closely following him as he read, " Dr. Robinson,

in my lexicon, has a second meaning to this word *bapto*."

"Yes, and I will read it, 'to tinge, to dye.'"

"Well, does this not evidently show, sir, that 'to dip, to immerse,' is not its only signification, and if other meanings are admitted, why contend that his definition favors immersion? Certainly if it can signify *to dye, to tinge*, may it not also be rendered *to pour*, or *to sprinkle*?"

"That's a fact, Brother Gordon; it can just as well mean one as the other."

"But you observe, Mr. Gordon, that this second meaning is preceded by '*by impl.*,' and this abbreviated term means *by implication*, showing that this second meaning *to tinge, or dye*, which is the *effect* of dipping, is implied because the article to be thus colored has to be dipped or immersed in the coloring fluid. Therefore when *bapto* means staining, or dyeing, it is by *implication*, denoting that the article thus stained, or dyed, has been *dipped* instead of colored in any other manner. I think this array of lexicographers, of the highest note, is sufficient to establish my point, that is, that the *primary* and current meaning of the word *baptizo*, the word chosen by Christ in his commission to his apostles, is to dip, plunge, or immerse, and that all other significations are by implication, as the learned Dr. Robinson has it. I will now give the testimony of annotators and critics as to the meaning of this word, and you will perceive that their evidence entirely corresponds with the definitions I have just produced; and remember that my authorities were, many of them, Pedo-baptists by practice, but love of truth compelled them to give their evidence in favor of immersion.

“Gurtlerus, from whom I shall first read, says : ‘*To baptize*, among the Greeks, is undoubtedly *to immerse*, *to dip*; and baptism is immersion, dipping. The thing commanded by our Lord is baptism, “*immersion into water*.”’ Is not this strong language, uncle ?”

“Tut, tut, I know nothing about the man. He might have been an impostor, for all I know ; I am not going to take what he says for truth, I tell you, for I don’t believe a word of it. The fact of the business is, I don’t intend to listen to any such nonsense ; it may do for some, but it won’t answer for me.”

“I suppose, Mr. Gordon, you will not reject this witness as summarily as uncle has done ? Will you receive his testimony ?”

The minister bowed assent, while with nervous hand he turned the leaves of the lexicon he was holding.

“Well, now, uncle, I will read you from Calvin. You know who he was, and I am sure you will take his evidence as valid. Here, in his ‘*Institutes*,’ he expressly says : ‘The word *baptizo*,’ which is the very same used by Christ in the commission, ‘signifies *to immerse* ; and the rite of *immersion* was observed by the ancient church.’ Now if you think Calvin was an honest man, and knew what he was saying, I need go no further to prove to you that baptism, as Christ and his disciples understood it, was immersion, and that this was the practice of the first churches ; for he says, without any qualification whatever, that ‘*immersion was observed by the ancient churches*.’”

“Why didn’t he practice it, then ? It seems to me he was a very inconsistent man, saying one thing, and doing another.” ~

“And so I think, uncle ; not only he, but all others who admit this to be the meaning of Christ, when he said, ‘Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, *baptizing* them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost ;’ and also that it was the practice of the apostles, and those that succeeded them, even down to the third century, when we have the case of Novatian, which I read to you last evening, and which is the first instance of sprinkling as a baptismal ordinance on record, and at the same time not only submit to sprinkling themselves, but advocate it as baptism. I agree with you, sir, that such conduct is strangely inconsistent.”

“But what were the great Calvin’s reasons for doing so ?”

“I will read you his answer from his ‘Institutes,’ in his own words ; hear him : ‘The difference is of no moment, whether he that is baptized be dipped all over ; and if so, whether thrice or once ; or whether he be only wetted with the water poured on him.’ Thus he asserts, sir, as if man had the authority to change the ordinance which our Saviour himself gave to his people as an example which they should follow.”

Mr. Lewis spoke with some warmth. Old Mr. Holmes knew not how to reply. He had supposed all the great and good men had contended that Christ himself was poured upon. Mr. Lewis continued :

“I will now read you from Luther. You also know who he was, and can not doubt his veracity. Here, in this first volume of his works, he says : ‘Baptism is a Greek word, and may be translated *immersion*, as when we immerse something in water, that it may be *wholly covered*. And although it is almost wholly abolished,

for they do not dip the whole children, but only pour a little water on them, *they ought, nevertheless, to be WHOLLY IMMERSED*, and then immediately drawn out ; for that *the etymology of the word seems to demand.*' Again he says : ' Washing of sins is attributed to baptism ; it is truly indeed, attributed, but the signification is softer and slower than it can express baptism, *which is rather a sign both of death and resurrection.* Being moved by this reason, *I would have those that are to be baptized to be altogether dipped into the water, as the word doth sound, and the mystery doth signify.*'

'Grotius, who is equally reliable, says : 'That this rite (of baptism) was wont to be performed by *immersion*, and not by *perfusion*, appears both by the propriety of the word, and the places chosen for its administration,' and he refers to John, iii. 23, and Acts, viii. 38 ; 'and also,' he says, 'by the many allusions of the apostles, which *can not be* referred to sprinkling." Here he cites Romans, vi. 3, 4, and Colossians, ii. 12, and adds : 'The custom of perfusion or aspersion, seems to have obtained sometime after, in favor of such who, lying dangerously ill, were desirous to dedicate themselves to Christ. These were called *Clinics* by other Christians. * * * Nor should we wonder that the old Latin fathers used *tingere* for *baptizare*, seeing the Latin word, *tingo*, does, properly and generally, signify the same as *mersare*, to immerse or plunge.'

"Dr. Doddridge, in his Paraphrase on Luke, xii. 50, says : 'I have, indeed, a most dreadful baptism to be baptized with, and know that I shall shortly be *bathed*, as it were, in blood, and *plunged* in the most overwhelming distresses.'

“I will read the testimony of one other, and then give you the evidence of Joseph Samuel Frey, who was brought up in the Jewish faith until he was twenty-five years of age, and then, embracing the Christian religion, united with the Presbyterian church, of which he remained a member about thirty years; then being convinced, as he himself says, ‘after much reading, meditation, and prayer, and carefully comparing the best books on both sides of the question with the word of God, *that believers are the only subjects of baptism, and that immersion is the only scriptural mode,*’ felt it his duty to obey ‘the command of his Lord and Saviour to be baptized, *i. e. immersed,*’ and accordingly joined the Baptist church.

“But I will first read you Witsius. He asks the question, ‘How were the Israelites baptized in the cloud and in the sea, seeing they were neither immersed in the sea, nor wetted by the cloud?’ And this is his answer: ‘It is to be considered that the apostle here uses the term baptism in a figurative sense. The cloud hung over their heads; and so the water is over those that are baptized. The sea surrounded them on each side, and so the water in regard of those that are baptized.’

“I will now read you at some length from the Rev. Mr. Frey, as I regard his authority on the signification of the word under dispute as highly reliable, from the fact that he was an educated Jew, and, of course, conversant with the Old Testament Scriptures in Hebrew, and consequently can give us with definiteness and point, the meaning of the different terms used to express dipping, pouring, and sprinkling.

“In remarking on the terms, *rantizo*, to sprinkle;

ekkeo, to pour out ; *louo*, to wash ; *baptizo*, to immerse, he says : ‘ The latter of these, with its derivatives, is invariably used through the New Testament, in relation to this ordinance (that of immersion). If washing, pouring, or sprinkling, had been sufficient, it is certainly worth our inquiry, why did the inspired writers *always* use one and the same word, acknowledged by all to signify *primarily* and *constantly* to immerse ? Now, as we never mean to *sprinkle* when we say to *immerse*, so, when our blessed Lord said *baptizantes, immersing them*, he did not mean *rantizantes, sprinkling them*.’

“ In support of his assertion he quotes from many learned Pedo-baptists, some of whom I have given you, and introduces the deposition of Edward Leigh, who was a learned Pedo of the seventeenth century. Leigh says : ‘ The *native* and *proper* signification of it (*baptizo*) is to *dip into* water, or to *plunge into* water.’ He then adduces in proof of his position John, iii. 22, 23 ; also Matt., iii. 16, and Acts, viii. 38, upon which Mr. Frey thus comments : ‘ The reader will observe that this writer admits that “ the native and proper signification of the term (*baptizo*) is to dip into water, or to plunge under water,” and to show this “ native and proper signification,” he cites the practice of “ *Jesus*” and “ *John*” and “ *Philip*.” And yet this man was so much a Pedo-baptist as to say, “ Christ nowhere requireth *dipping*, but only *baptizing*.” That is, if I understand the meaning of his words, Christ nowhere requireth *dipping* but only *dipping*.’

“ In speaking of this word not being translated, but only transferred, he remarks, ‘ I was utterly unable to account for the reasons, until, of late, I have learned

that those holy men of God (the translators) were shackled by certain laws, rules, and regulations drawn up by the Bench of Bishops, and sanctioned by King James, which actually prohibited the translation of the word in *every instance* relating to the ordinance of baptism.

“‘ A similar transaction,’ he adds, ‘ took place a few years ago. When the London Society for Promoting Christianity among the Jews commenced the translation of the New Testament into pure Hebrew, they soon met with the word under consideration, and which occasioned not a little difficulty. Not with respect to the primary meaning of the word, nor to find a proper corresponding Hebrew word, but the difficulty was, how to avoid giving offense. Had they adopted the word *taval* or *tabal*, to immerse, or *rachatz* to wash (which words are nearly synonymous, for washing implies dipping or immersion, as nothing can be washed unless it be covered first with water), whilst *they would have done justice to the original* they would have given offense to the mass or bulk of the Pede-baptists ; on the other hand, had they used the word *shaphach*, to pour, or *zarak* to sprinkle, besides *doing violence to the original*, they would not only have given just offense to the whole large and respectable body of Baptists, but even many pious and conscientious Pede-baptists would have condemned their conduct.’ ”

“ Well, I should like to know what they did, then ? If they couldn’t use sprinkle nor dip, what did they do, pray ? ”

“ Just see, uncle, how they did deliver themselves from their dilemma. Mr. Frey shall answer your ques-

tion. '*Policy*, therefore, led them *not to translate the word at all*; but *to metamorphose the Greek word into Hebrew* for the use of the text, and in the *margin* they put the words *taval* to immerse, and *rachatz* to wash; but nowhere did they use the word *shaphach*, to pour, or *zarak*, to sprinkle. Different has been their conduct in their late translation of the New Testament into the Polish-Hebrew dialect. Here the word *taval*, to immerse, is invariably used in the text. At this I am much pleased; for as soon as the Jew sees the word *taval* he knows that the ordinance is to be administered by *immersion*, and in no other way. The reason why in this translation the proper word is inserted, I suppose, is, that it being designed for the Jews in Germany and particularly in Poland, or Russia, no danger is to be apprehended of giving offense. For,' says he, 'we have already shown that in the German Bible the word which signifies immersion, is used, and in Russia baptism has never been administered in any other way.'

"One more quotation from him, and I will turn to Mr. Beecher, who is acknowledged by all Pedo-baptists as standard authority. After noticing several objections which have been urged against the meaning of the word as I have been contending for, it he says: 'The next objection is, that the word *baptizo* signifies to wash as well as to *immerse*; and for proof an appeal is made to Mark, vii. 2-8, where the washing of hands, cups, etc., etc., is mentioned. But no argument can be taken from this passage in favor of any other mode than immersion. Every Jew knows that whatever is to be purified by water, whether cups, tables, beds, etc., *it must be done by immersion*. "And upon whatsoever any

of them, when they are dead, doth fall, it shall be unclean ; whether it be any vessel of wood, or raiment, or skin, or sack, or *whatsoever vessel it be, wherein any work is done, it must be put into water*, and it shall be unclean until the even ; so it shall be cleansed." (Levit., xi. 32.)'

"And now, Mr. Gordon, I will give you one more authority, and then leave you to decide if I have not established my point, that the proper signification of the Greek word *baptizo* is *immersion*. This last witness is no other than the Rev. Mr. Beecher, who, you know, is regarded as one of the strongest supporters your cause can boast. Now I wish you to listen attentively while I read his deposition. Here, in his work on the 'Import and Modes of Baptism,' pages 233, 234, he uses the following clear and sensible language : 'The settlement of this question has been greatly hindered by attempts to prove that *baptizo* means to sprinkle, or pour. I have never seen the least evidence that it has either of these meanings, and to attempt to defend the cause of sprinkling, or pouring, on such grounds, is, in my judgment, to make a false issue, and in effect to betray the cause ; and yet it has been often done, and is still done ; I shall not wonder if Baptists remain ever unconvinced by such arguments as these.

" 'The settlement of this question is also greatly hindered by admitting that *baptizo* in the command means to immerse, and yet claiming the right on the ground of expediency to practice sprinkling, because, in our judgment, it retains the essence of the command ; especially if it is at the same time conceded that Rom., vi. 3, 4, and Col., ii. 12, relate to the external rite, and

that the early church understood *baptizo* as meaning immerse, and practiced immersion for that reason. When all this is conceded, the whole question is conceded, *it is perfect logical demonstration* in favor of immersion. * * * Nor should I wonder if the Baptists remain forever unconvinced by such reasoning as this.' He says in the next paragraph, that 'the real and only issue is this, Is the command an open command? Is it a command to purify, or a command to perform an external specific act? One or the other it is; Which? If the latter, then let us all obey; if a command to purify, then let us all cease to dispute about forms, and obey in that mode which seems to us most significant, decorous, and solemn.'

"Now, I would ask you, Mr. Gordon, if you believe, with Mr. Beecher, that baptism is a purification? But let me read you what he says upon this point before you answer.

"Here, on page 207, he says: 'A commission to baptize is, in fact, a commission to purify; that is, a commission to remit sins—and in Luke and John the disciples do receive a commission to remit sins.' Mark this statement. In proof of this position he quotes Luke, xxiv. 47, 48: 'That repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations—and ye are witnesses of these things;' that is, that repentance and baptism should be preached in his name among all nations; for, according to Zonares and the Fathers, baptism is the forgiveness of sins by water and the Spirit. He gives the import of the commission (Matt., xxviii. 19) thus: 'Go ye, therefore, teaching all nations, purifying them (that is, *remitting* to them that

repent and believe, *their sins*), in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.'

"Now do you believe, with Mr. Beecher, that 'the commission to baptize is a commission to remit sins?' If so, you and Mr. Campbell are agreed on one point, at least."

"No, I do not believe any such thing. Does Mr. Beecher say so? This is not the doctrine of Presbyterians; they do not believe that a man is regenerated in baptism."

"This is not only the testimony of Mr. Beecher, my friend, but he is supported by the Rev. Thomas Clelland; one of the fathers of Presbyterianism in this, our own State. Let me read you his own words from this little book, which he has put forth on the subject of baptism. In speaking of the dispute that arose between the disciples of John and the Jews about purifying, while he was baptizing in Enon, he uses this definite language: 'To settle it, they come and refer it to John, under the shape of a question about baptizing. Their minds fastened on the substance—the thing itself—not on the circumstance. Baptism with them was not *immersing*, or any other external mode, but a *purifying*. Their question is about baptizing; but it is not about dipping, or sprinkling, or pouring, or immersing; none of these, but about *purifying*.' Then he adds, 'the following translation of the passage, we are assured, will present the true sense and the argument at once to the eye: "After these things came Jesus and his disciples into the land of Judea, and there he tarried with them and *purified*. And John was purifying in Enon, near Salim, because there was much water there; and they

came to him and were *purified*. Therefore there arose a question, concerning purification, between some of the disciples of John and the Jews, and they came unto John, and said unto him, Rabbi, he that was with thee beyond Jordan, to whom thou bearest witness, the same *purifieth*, and all men come to him.”’

“How do you like the rendering of your reverend doctor, Mr. Gordon?”

“Well, I don’t know but what baptism is a purification, in a certain sense;” and the minister drew down his brow and scratched his head, while his mind only grew the more and more puzzled.

“Certainly it means that,” said old Mr. Holmes, confidently, determined to agree with the Presbyterian doctors, let them say what they might.

“In *what sense* do you ascribe purification to baptism, Mr. Gordon? You have said it does not mean regeneration, and if it refers to the purifying of the body, certainly you must admit that a bath is far better for this purpose than a little water sprinkled on the forehead. But, further, your defendant, Mr. Beecher, here says, ‘the word *baptize*, as applied to a given rite, has *not two*, or many meanings, but *one*.’ That is, it either means a *certain mode*, or else *purification*. Now if you say it means the external rite, he says, ‘*the whole question is conceded; it is a perfect logical demonstration in favor of immersion.*’ But if, on the other hand, you contend that it is *purification*, why, then you sanction the identical prerogative assumed by the Romish priesthood. Now how will you settle this question? You can not deny that if the mode is meant, that mode must be *immersion*. That this is true, the strongest advocates of sprinkling

and pouring not only admit, but assert ; this I have fully established to-night from their own words. But if you deny this, and say it only means to *purify*, then with Mr. Beecher, Mr. Campbell of the Reformation, and the Pope of Rome, you contend that baptism is *regeneration*. Which will you take, sir, Scylla or Charybdis ?”

“ I will assume neither ground fully.”

“ But Mr. Beecher says, and if you will take pains to read him carefully, you will find that he makes good his position, that it means either *immersion* or *purification*. Have you read his work thoroughly ? I see you have it among your books.”

“ No, I have not had time to study it ; but I shall do so right away. He assumes a ground with regard to the meaning of this word *baptize* that I can not possibly take ; and which, I think, very few of our churches will support him in.”

“ Well, what is your idea of the design of baptism, Mr. Gordon ? If it is not *purification*, what is it ?”

“ I regard it as a symbol of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the heart.”

“ As a sign or witness of this influence ?”

“ Yes.”

“ What then will you do with this passage, ‘ There are three that bear witness in earth, the Spirit, and the water, and the blood, and these three agree in one ?’ You will admit that the water here mentioned refers to baptism, I suppose ?”

“ Most undoubtedly.”

“ Let me ask you, then, of what does the Spirit witness, of itself, or of Christ ?”

"Why of Christ, of course."

"Well, now, mark that this holy word of inspiration says that these three 'agree in one' in their witness, and you say the Spirit witnesses of *Christ, not of itself*; so baptism *must witness of Christ, not of itself, nor of the Spirit*. You clearly see, then, that to admit Mr. Beecher's reasoning, supported, as it is, by Dr. Clelland, would inevitably lead you to baptismal regeneration; or, as Mr. Beecher expresses it, 'forgiveness of sins by baptism'; while to contend for the position you take, will make the water mentioned here in 1 John, v. 8, and which you say is baptism, witness of the Spirit, which, from your own statement, you see can not be. You will have either to expunge this witness against you from God's book, or give up your untenable position, Mr. Gordon. Now which will you do?"

"I would not do the one, nor will I do the other, until I am convinced that I can no longer retain it."

"I would just here ask you, if you regard baptism as a New Testament ordinance?"

"I do."

"Moral or positive?"

"Positive, of course."

"Consequently deriving its binding force from the authority of him who instituted it, and from no other possible source or cause?"

"That is my view, sir, of the ordinance."

"Well, again I would ask you, do you regard that Christ was not only competent to, but that he did deliver this command in words, whose meaning could be understood by those who received the commission?"

"He was not only competent to do so, but that he

did use language that was fully understood by his disciples, I do not for a moment doubt."

"And you will also admit, I suppose, that Christ had a right to institute this ordinance, and that man should not dare to change it?"

"His authority was divine; and no man dare add to, or take away from, the things written in this book."

"Now, Mr. Gordon, let me sum up your admissions and the testimony of your learned Pede-baptist writers, and see what they amount to. In the first place, *you* concede that baptism is a New Testament ordinance, instituted by Christ, who, from his divine authority, had an indisputable right to establish it, and enjoin it upon his followers, and that no man should presume to change it in any particular. In the second place *they*, the Fathers and modern advocates of sprinkling, concede that the primary meaning of *baptizo* is immerse, and that immersion was the practice of the primitive churches. These are the premises, I will leave all present to draw the conclusions."

The minister looked puzzled, and for a few moments remained silent. How should he, in avoiding Scylla, escape Charybdis? All eyes were bent upon him, and he felt the weight of their anxious inquiry, which only served to increase his embarrassment. Mrs. Holmes knit away rapidly—she sympathized with her pastor. Fannie laid down her work, eagerly awaiting his reply. Old Mr. Holmes frowned heavily, and turned himself uneasily in his chair. He had been remarkably quiet throughout the whole discussion, leaving it to Mr. Gordon, in whose ability to support his cause he placed the utmost reliance, to defend the cherished doctrines

of his church. And now that he saw him brought to a stand, he was half provoked, and did not know what to say or do. Old Aunt Peggy twitched her cap-string (a little trick of hers whenever she felt excited), and shaking her right foot, which rested upon the other for support, most violently, she fixed her small black eyes upon the minister with an expression so earnestly quizzical that young Mr. Holmes, who chanced to look at her just then, burst into a hearty laugh, exclaiming,

“Well, Mr. Gordon, Aunt Peggy thinks you had as well give it up. And if she is to act as umpire, she will pronounce you defeated, and this discussion at a close.”

The interlude of pleasant repartee which followed this speech of young Mr. Holmes, gave the minister time to collect his thoughts, and as soon as silence was restored, he remarked, as he took a book from the table, and turned the leaves,

“While I may admit that the mode has been changed” (here old Mr. Holmes looked up in surprise, but said nothing), “and you know all Pedo-baptists regard this as irrelevant in a certain degree to the thing itself, I contend that we preserve the design of this institution.”

“And what do you regard this design to be?”

“In reply, I will read you a few words from this author, although I can not say that I fully agree with him in his views. The idea is a new one to me, and seems very plausible, yet I am not ready to adopt it as an argument until I shall consider it more closely. I accidentally crossed it to-day. But I will read.

““The Apostle Paul tells us, Heb., v. 5, that *Christ*

did not glorify *himself* to be made a high priest, but he then said unto him, "Thou art my son ; this day have I begotten thee." Here it is expressly said that the *Father* glorified him by making him a high priest when he uttered these words, and this was at his baptism. And,' adds the writer, 'we have either to admit that *this* was the *design* of Christ's baptism, or *deny that he fulfilled all righteousness.*' And after making some comments upon the ceremonial law and its requirements, as binding upon our Saviour, he says : 'We are brought to this alternative, viz., either to admit that Christ our Priest was baptized in obedience to this statute (which required him "to fulfil all righteousness"), or to deny that he fulfilled all righteousness.'"

"You read from Messrs Cooke and Towne's 'Hints to an Inquirer,' do you not, Mr. Gordon ?"

"Yes."

"Well, let me assure you, sir, it is not a new idea with them ; many other Pedoes contend for the same thing. But just let me read you a few words from this 'Reply, of Rev. William Hague, which, I think, will put your mind forever at rest on this point. Dealing with the assertion you have just read to us, he says : 'First, we are informed that Christ's baptism was not Christian—only a *Jewish ceremony*. Now, there is one passage of Scripture which sweeps all this away. It is Hebrews, vii. 14, where Paul says : "It is evident that our Lord sprang out of Judah ; of which tribe Moses *spake nothing concerning the priesthood.*" Here the apostle asserts, that no statute of the Mosaic law touched the priesthood of Christ who (verse 13) "pertaineth to

another tribe, of which no man gave attendance at the altar." " "

"This answer seems conclusive, Mr. Lewis, and while I do not accede to his proposition, I yet contend that the design of baptism is to represent the Spirit's influence on the heart, and which is represented as being *poured out*, or *sprinkled upon*, as in Hebrews, x. 22, 'having our hearts *sprinkled* from an evil conscience.' "

"Continue the quotation, Mr. Gordon, if you please, and even here you will find immersion."

" 'And our bodies washed with pure water'—but it does not necessarily follow that the body must be immersed, in order to be washed."

"You must admit, sir, that our usual method of washing things is to dip or immerse them in water. And you certainly will not say that the pouring of water on the head, or the sprinkling of a few drops of water on the forehead, is a washing of the whole body. The Jews did not so understand it. Frey, whom I have quoted before, and who may be regarded as the very best authority, being a Jew, and to the age of twenty-five was a member of that church, says : '*Every Jew knows that whatever is to be purified by water, whether cups, tables, beds, etc., it must be by immersion.*' And I think, Mr. Gordon, I have shown you from the words of John, that baptism bears witness of Christ, and *not of the Spirit*. And in this view I am again supported by the wise and learned, and above all, by the word of God. That it is a public profession of faith in Christ, the Apostle Paul sufficiently attests in these words : 'For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ, have put on Christ'

(Gal., iii. 27), that is, outwardly, for we put him on inwardly, when the heart, changed by the operations of the Holy Spirit, can look up to him and say, "my Lord and my God." That it also represents the *death, burial, and resurrection* of Christ, is evident from this testimony of the inspired apostle: 'Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death; that, like as Christ was raised up from the dead, even so we also should walk in newness of life' (Rom., vi. 4); and again: '*Buried with him in baptism*' (Col., ii. 12). This is Paul's testimony, and what, let me ask, so fully represents a *burial and resurrection* as the immersion of a body in water? This is evident to all, even the most prejudiced. And to say that Paul was only speaking in a 'figurative manner,' and had no allusion whatever to baptism in water, is to assert what no man can prove, and what to every candid mind seems presumption in the highest degree. But I will read the opinions of a few who, having made the subject their study, and brought their energies, their time, and every available means of information to bear upon it, certainly deserve our attention. I will read but four or five, as it is growing late, and I think you must already be convinced that baptism is immersion in water in the name of the holy Trinity.

"Dr. Robert Newton says: 'Baptism was usually performed by immersion, or dipping the whole body under water, to represent the death, the burial, and resurrection of Christ together; and therewith to signify the person's own dying to sin, the destruction of its power, and his resurrection to new life. St. Paul plainly refers to this custom in Romans, vi. 4.'

"A. H. Frankius says: 'The baptism of Christ rep-

resented his sufferings, Matt., xx. 22, and *his coming up out of the water, his resurrection from the dead.*'

"Dr. T. Goodwin bears this testimony: 'The *eminent* thing signified and represented in baptism is not simply the blood of Christ as it washeth us from sin; but there is a *further representation therein of Christ's death, burial, and resurrection*, in the baptized's being first buried under water, and then rising out of it.'

"Grotius: '*Buried with him by baptism*. Not only the *word baptism*, but the *very form* of it intimates this. For an immersion of the whole body in water, so that it is no longer beheld, bears an image of that burial that is given to the dead.'

"Church of England: '*As we be buried with Christ by our baptism into death*, so let us daily die to sin, mortifying and killing the evil motions thereof; and as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father; so, *let us rise to a new life*, and walk continually therein.'

"Buddeus: '*Immersion*, which was used in former times, as we have before declared, was a symbol and an *image of the death and burial of Christ*. An *emersion* out of the water follows, which exhibits a most beautiful image of the *resurrection of Christ*.'

"Estius says: 'The ceremony of *immersion* was anciently more common, as appears from the *unanimous language of the Fathers*, as often as they speak about baptism; and in a more expressive manner it represents the death, burial, and resurrection of our Lord, and of us.'

"Vossius uses this plain language: 'All the particulars that we have mentioned, concerning the signification of baptism, will appear with sufficient perspicuity in

the rite of *immersion*, but not equally so, if *mere sprinkling* be used.'

"I could read you many more whose attestation in favor of immersion is equally strong and clear, but I suppose these will suffice. Let us for a moment look at the metaphorical use of this word *baptizo*, and here, again, I think we shall find another proof that it means *immersion*. Our Lord, in speaking of his approaching sufferings, calls them *baptism*; and surely he did not mean that they would be sprinkled upon him. They were to be intense, even as great as he could bear. He was to be plunged under their weight, to be overwhelmed by them, and what can so significantly shadow forth the deep anguish beneath which even he bowed, than immersion? Here, in Matt., xx. 22, he says: 'Are ye able to drink of the cup that I shall drink of, and to be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?' And again, in Luke, xii. 50, he utters these expressive words: 'I have a baptism to be baptized with, and how am I straitened till it be accomplished.' Now, to regard immersion as baptism, we can well see how fully, how clearly it embodies the sense of our Saviour's words—how it speaks the greatness and abundance of his sufferings. But how trifling would these sufferings appear, if the baptism meant mere sprinkling. I shall make no further comments upon these passages. You can all see their force."

"You and father will have to give up your sprinkling, Mr. Gordon, or be guilty of adhering to a practice which is of man's invention. Ed. has established his point, and we will all have to be immersed. Don't you say so, mother?"

"We should always follow the convictions of our better judgment, son, particularly in matters of religion."

"Tut, tut, John ; do you think Brother Gordon and I are going to give up our point, just because Ed. has been reading all these books to us ? The Bible says *sprinkling*, and I am going to believe it, and contend for it ; ain't you, Brother Gordon ?"

The minister hesitated for a moment, and then replied :

"I have always felt that the *mode* of baptism was not essential, and I am still of the opinion that we should have regard to the substance or design, and not to the mere form of the act. But I must give the whole subject a thorough investigation. Mr. Lewis has opened up to me some views that I have never before entertained. I have several works here on baptism which I have never read, but I shall not stop now until they are all thoroughly studied."

"That's right, Brother Gordon ; I know they will only confirm you in the faith. As for me, I shall give myself no trouble about it. My wife and all the children have been baptized, and it would be poorly worth my while to be bothering my head about it now."

"Should you need any books that I have, Mr. Gordon, they are at your command. My supply on this subject is pretty good, and here is my hand—and he extended his hand to the pastor, while a pleasant smile lighted up his face—and my sincerest wishes that you may become an unflinching Baptist."

The proffered hand was cordially received, and while Mr. Gordon shook it most warmly, he said :

"And you have my earnest wishes that you may be led by the Spirit of all truth, and may become an able defender of that cause you have so sanguinely espoused."

"You don't want Ed. to be a preacher, Brother Gordon?"

"I desire to see him a Christian, Brother Holmes."

As soon as Mr. Gordon had released Mr. Lewis's hand, old Aunt Peggy rushed up to him, and, seizing it, said, in a voice of exultation, while tears mingled with her smiles:

"Bless de Lord for dis, Mas'r Ed. ! bless de Lord for dis. You have told his trut' dis night ; I know you have, for I've felt it here," placing her left hand on her heart, "if I couldn't understand all you said. Go on in de right way, and may de good Lord be wid you."

"Well, Fan, you haven't told us what you think about the matter. I have noticed that you have quite as much interest in this discussion as father and Aunt Peggy. Are you for immersion or sprinkling? Come, speak out ; it is the only way to get the vote," he said, laughingly, as he observed her hesitation ; "every body is at liberty to express an opinion."

She saw the eyes of her father and the minister fastened upon her, and blushing, she replied :

"I shall have to give the casting vote if I express my opinion. As the matter stands now, it is a tie—father and mother for Mr. Gordon, and you and Aunt Peggy for Cousin Ed., and I think it had better remain so."

"Indeed, I think mother has not expressed her opinion as to which has gained the victory, but we will count

her for Mr. Gordon. And yet, Mr. Gordon, I am not sure that you are for yourself; however, we will give you two votes; now, Fan, let us have yours."

"Speak out, Fannie, why don't you?" said her father, thinking her embarrassment arose from a timidity to testify for Mr. Gordon.

"Well, father, as you will make me decide, I must give my support to Cousin Ed."

"Pshaw, Fannie, you don't know what you are talking about, girl; remember, you have been sprinkled, and you certainly don't want to be baptized again. The Scriptures say, 'one baptism.' The fact of the business is, the matter is settled with you. You are never going to be dipped while you are my daughter."

"You will return with me, Ed., it is growing late—twenty minutes to twelve, my watch says. We must get home as soon as possible, for Grace will be waiting for us. Won't you accompany us, Mr. Gordon?"

"Brother Gordon will stay with us, to-night."

"Thank you, Sister Holmes, I must go home; I told Brother Dodge that I would be back, and they will be expecting me."

"Aunt Peggy, you had better stay all night with us. It is too late for you to go out."

"Thanky, missis, I'll go back with Massa John, if you please. It is sich a little way, and den Miss Gracey will need me in de morning, seeing she has company—Miss Lyddy and her brother."

"Get your bonnet and shawl, then, Aunt Peggy, and we will be off."

The minister threw his cloak around him, and, bidding the family good-night, left with the other gentlemen.

CHAPTER XVII.

“PERSECUTED, BUT NOT FORSAKEN—CAST DOWN,
BUT NOT DESTROYED.”—*Paul.*

“WELL,” said young Mr. Holmes, after several minutes’ silence, to Mr. Lewis, as they were walking home, “I must say, Ed., that I am perfectly surprised at the amount of evidence the Baptists have for their close communion, and I do not wonder that they adhere so tenaciously to immersion, believing, as they do—and they have reason to believe it—that it was the manner in which their Saviour was baptized, and which he has left to the world as an example for his followers. Mr. Gordon felt badly to-night because he could not support his side of the question better ; did you notice it, Ed. ? and father was provoked beyond measure. It is astonishing that he is so prejudiced against ‘dipping,’ as he calls it, when he will admit that it is valid.”

“Yes, it is strange, John ; but we should make all charitable allowance for your father’s early education, and his peculiar temperament. He was brought up in the midst of Presbyterianism by very strict Presbyterian parents, and was taught, from his very childhood, to regard immersion as a low, indecent practice, originating in ignorance and want of proper refinement, and propagated by bigotry and sectarianism. But tell me,

seriously, John, are you fully convinced on this point ? is your mind entirely at rest on the subject ?”

“I am fully convinced, from all you have said to-night, that immersion is scriptural baptism ; but I shall not trouble my head about it. I am willing that every body shall believe just what they please, and act as they please ; but it is a matter that gives me but little concern, and I will leave it to those to discuss who feel interested in it. I was sprinkled in infancy, and joined the church under excitement. I know now that I was deceived, and have been suffered to remain deceived by those who professed to be leaders, and show me the right way ; and now that I am convinced of my error, I am determined to give the thing up entirely.”

He hesitated a moment, as if uncertain what next to say.

“Isn’t this the best way, Aunt Peggy ?” he added, turning and addressing the old servant, who was following in their rear, and listening attentively to every word.

“No, no, Massa John, dis is not de best way, bless de Lord. We ought to give earnest heed to dese things, les at any time we let dem slip ; don’t the ’postle say so, Massa Ed. ?”

“Yes, Aunt Peggy ; and it is a truth that should come home to all of us with great force and solemnity ; for if we do not heed these things, how can we hope to be saved ?”

“Dat’s true, Massa Ed. ; dat’s true, bless de Lord ! for de-Bible says dar is no other way under heaven.”

“You do not mean to say, John, that you do not intend to give any thought to the subject of your soul’s salvation ? You can not mean this ? There are many

considerations why you should give up the careless, reckless course you are now pursuing, and direct your attention earnestly, anxiously, to this matter. I *must* speak to you candidly, unreservedly, now that I have an opportunity, and I hope you will listen to my words. Think of the deep unhappiness you are inflicting upon your family ; the torturing anguish you are daily heaping upon your wife by your utter neglect of holy things ; think of her silent tears, her aching heart, her wasting fears. Have you not observed her dejection and sadness, notwithstanding her evident effort to be cheerful ? You surely have not failed to see all this, John, and to ask yourself the cause of this great change in her ?”

“Why, what are you talking about, Ed. ? you certainly do not think my wife is grieved about my conduct, do you ?”

“I most assuredly do ; I know it is so. Have you not noticed her dejection ?”

“I know she is not so buoyant and cheerful as she was when we were married, and you could not expect this. The cares of a family, however small, will sober any conscientious, reflecting woman like Grace. I tell you, you are entirely mistaken on this point. Grace is not unhappy ; she is only a little more serious than she was a year ago.”

How often it is that men are thus mistaken with regard to the toils and sufferings of their wives ! Patient, uncomplaining woman, full of fortitude, murmurs not ; but, trusting in the arm of the mighty Helper, guided by the flickering, yet never-failing light of faith and hope, she moves on in the uneven pathway of duty ; clinging, O, so lovingly, to her heart’s earthly idol, meeting

all, enduring all, hoping all, because of her devotion to him. Nothing of earth is half so beautiful as the undying, unselfish love of a true woman. It is a perennial flower, throwing its beauty and fragrance over the waste of life ; a priceless gem, far outvaluing all the wealth of all earth's mines ; a more than Aladdin's lamp, whose power ever commands treasures of contentment and happiness ; treasures which the uncounted sums of caliph and sultan can never buy.

Mr. Lewis scarcely knew how to proceed. He wished to deal faithfully with his cousin ; to win him, if it were possible, from the evil habits which were fast weaving their meshes about him ; to avert, before it was too late, the dread Harmattan of infidelity, ere its scorching breath should dry up and leave desolate the fountain of good within his soul ; but he feared lest the very effort to lead him back to the way of virtue and peace, would but impel him onward in the course he had recently entered upon.

After a few moments' pause he took the arm of his cousin, and, in a voice whose strong, low tones betrayed the deep feelings of his heart, he said,

"I am going to talk to you as to a brother, John ; and I hope you will listen to me. Your course, for the last three months, has caused your wife, your parents, and your friends, great pain and anxiety ; of this you must be aware ; you can not be so blind as not to perceive the grief it has given us all, and particularly Grace, who sometimes fears that perhaps she has been instrumental in it by not uniting with the Presbyterian church. This has been suggested to her, and you can imagine her feelings even at the supposition that it is so."

"Nonsense ! Grace knows my opinions about this thing. I have always told her to do as she believed best. As regards my conduct, I do not see where that has been so bad. I have not attended church regularly, I'll confess ; but then, can not a man be as moral at home as in the meeting house ? And as to that difficulty with Frank Pierce, you must all see that he grossly insulted me ; and I feel that I would deserve the contempt of all who know me, if I had tamely submitted to it."

"But, John, these are not the only departures from the right way. Disagreeable as it is to me, I must speak to you faithfully."

"Yes, yes, I know what you would say, Ed. I did, on two or three convivial occasions with Hastings and a few friends, drink a little too much : but I have given over all such enjoyment, and am determined never to be so foolish again."

"I am glad, John, that you have formed this resolution ; duty to yourself, to your wife, to the world, demands that you should pursue a different course ; I speak to you plainly, John, and earnestly, for I feel deeply interested in your welfare ; I would fain wish that my words may have weight in fixing you in your determination. But let me entreat you not to rest satisfied here. The strictest morality will not insure you happiness, even for this life ; the soul needs a higher refuge ; its aspirations ever ascend after something beyond the power of this world to bestow ; and unless it reaches and fastens upon the only Good, its longings are but as the burning thirst of the famishing traveler in the desert-land, where there are no water-

springs—as the unsatisfied cries of hunger in the wilderness, where there is no bread. I know you will find it very difficult, for a time, to resist the temptations which you must meet ; to break away from the associations that you have formed during the summer. Hastings will not give you up without an effort ; he is persevering, cautious, and, what will render your danger greater and your work more laborious, is, his peculiarly fascinating manner. But remain steadfast in the consciousness of the *right* of your course, and battle your enemies, in whatever form they may present themselves, with a fixed determination to conquer. ‘ Resist Satan, and he will flee from you,’ is the assurance of the word of God.”

“ You seem to be pretty well posted in Bible language, Ed., you certainly have been making that book your study,” he replied, in a tone of assumed badinage. But could his cousin have looked into his heart, he would have seen that every word of his had entered and found lasting lodgment there.

Old Aunt Peggy intuitively read the quick change ; and, stepping round to the side of her young master, and looking into his face, which the rays of the half-risen moon furtively revealed, she said :

“ It’s true, Massa John, bless de Lord ! every word dat Massa Edward has told you ; dis world can not make us happy. I has seen many a day, an’ am now an ole wumman, an’ I tells you we mus’ have sumthin’ better’n dis poor world can give us, to make us happy in it. I feels it, Massa John ; I knows it, bless de Lord !”

Just here, a turn in the meadow-path revealed to them, through the south window of Grace’s room, the

light burning within. They all saw it at once, and were hushed into silence. The thoughts of each mind were fixed upon the patient, watching wife. Not a word was spoken until they reached the door.

"Come in, Ed.," said Mr. Holmes, as they gained the steps. The tones of the husband caught the listening ear of the wife, and putting aside her Bible, which she had been prayerfully studying for the last hour, she rose and met him with her wonted smile.

How sad that smile now seemed to him. He had seen it oftentimes before—that same, sweet look ; but never had he observed that shade of melancholy which now, as a barbed arrow, pierced his very soul. The wife, with the quick eye of a woman's love, detected in a moment the sobered expression of her husband's face ; and she longed to ask the cause, but she dared not. Her heart suggested that something wrong had occurred during the discussion ; and she would not recall unpleasant scenes. She endeavored, by cheerful conversation and kind attention, to drive away his gloom, but it was of no avail. She then reached from the press a basket of most delightful fall-pippins, which she had reserved for them when they should come home, and while her husband ate his apple in silence, she asked Mr. Lewis about the controversy.

"I suppose you came off victorious, Cousin Ed. ?"

"Not in your father's estimation. He declared 'I had made nothing clear to his mind ; that I, and all the Fathers could not make him believe that dipping people head and ears under the water was what the Bible meant by baptism.'"

"O, father, you know, *will not be convinced* ; his mind

is made up, and nothing can change it. But what did the others decide—what is your opinion, Mr. Holmes?"

"Ed. beat Mr. Gordon, Grace ; he knows he did ; but I think all this arguing amounts to nothing, after all. People will believe just what they please."

There was something in his manner so strange, so cold, that she dared not question him further. So she addressed her conversation to Mr. Lewis, hoping, that in this way she might accomplish her wish. But there was not potency enough in her cheerful words and pleasant smiles to break the spell. The music of her tones could not drive away the "evil spirit," and after a half hour's fruitless endeavor, she yielded the undertaking.

Mr. Lewis was shown to bed. And then, in their privacy, she longed to ask her husband the cause of his distress, but judgment bade her be silent. And with a heavy, aching heart, she laid her down to rest ; but long hours after deep sleep had fallen upon all in the house, did she lie, vainly endeavoring to answer her own questions.

"Why need I rack my brain with further conjectures," she at length said to herself. "I will commend myself unto the Lord, and trust in him, and he shall bring it to pass." And "God, her Maker, gave unto her songs in the night."

Mr. Gordon had been exceedingly restless, since the discussion, to know the effect of it upon Fannie's mind. He had rejoiced with unusual satisfaction, that Grace was not present, knowing that she would have been able to detect his weak points, and to use them against him with advantage on future occasions. He thought it pos-

sible that Fannie, under the influence of her father's presence, and the excitement of the discussion, had failed to discover them. And by having his strongest arguments reiterated in her hearing, which he knew old Mr. Holmes was sure to do on every occasion, he hoped that if her doubts were not removed, they were at least not increased. And yet, with all his endeavors to solace himself with this belief, strong fears that it was not as he desired, would constantly haunt him. He therefore determined to avail himself of the very first opportunity that offered, to acquaint himself with the state of her feelings. A very opportune occasion was given the following evening.

Fannie had walked down to the village to make some little purchases for her mother, preparatory to the meeting, which was to begin the next Friday. Just as she had gained the corner of the pavement to turn in the direction of home, she encountered Mr. Gordon, who very kindly proffered to relieve her of her packages. She at first declined this gallantry, but being convinced that it was his intention to go home with her, she yielded him up the parcels. Her heart beat violently, and her hand trembled as she did so, for she read his object in a moment. He did not speak for some minutes. During the interval, she had time to scan the matter hastily, and, in some manner, to prepare herself for the attack.

"Well, Fannie," said he—the pastor had, for some time, addressed her thus familiarly—"what conclusion have you reached, with regard to baptism, since our last night's discussion?"

"Do you mean my views, Mr. Gordon, or my determination?" she asked, looking up into his face, inquiringly.

"Both, Fannie; and, as my earthly happiness is deeply involved in the question, I must ask of you a candid answer."

For a moment she made no reply. She was endeavoring to collect her thoughts, and to frame them into such words as would convey her views clearly. She desired to be fully understood—in no way to cause a false impression.

"You have asked me to give you an honest and definite answer, Mr. Gordon. I shall attempt to do so. My convictions respecting immersion as being the only mode of baptism, have been strengthened by the arguments I have listened to. I now look upon it as the *only* baptism of believers. As to my future course I have not decided. *I can not*," she said, with emphasis, while her voice grew tremulous with emotion.

"You have not, then, determined to join the Baptist church, Fannie?"

"No, I have formed no such determination."

"Let me beseech you, then, Fannie, before deciding on this step, to weigh the subject fully—all its consequences to yourself and to your friends. You know that it must forever raise an insuperable barrier to our union; and I need not tell you how this would crush out from my heart every ray of happiness. I need not tell you how ardently I love you, for that you already know. I can only urge upon you, by all that I hold most dear on earth, by the undying love of your parents to you, and a consideration of your father's known views, to act cautiously, to look at this matter calmly, to view it in all its bearings, present and future, temporal and eternal, and then to tread with prayerful feet the way before you.

Will you promise me, Fannie, to heed my request—to measure this subject in all its length and breadth before you act? It is momentous to me and to you. O, that I could make you feel its importance as I do! But I know not what to say, nor how to speak;” and his voice faltered beneath the agitation that shook his frame. “I would *that I could* say something that would place *it* before you in its true light! Promise me, Fannie, I beg of you, that you will not act hastily; and I will pray God that your doubts may be removed, and that peace may soon again return to your bosom.”

Her eyes had not met his. She had not seen the intense, pleading look he bent upon her, but she had *felt* the earnestness of his soul as the impassioned words fell upon her ear and burned themselves deep in upon her heart. The hand, that rested in his arm, trembled violently, and her whole being shook with the intensity of her feelings. She made no answer.

“Speak, Fannie, I entreat you; only say you will not act rashly.”

She raised her eyes to his, while the tears streamed down her cheeks.

“I will promise you this, Mr. Gordon; but I can not promise you any more. I would not take a step, fraught with so much moment to myself and to others, without due consideration. But do not, I beseech you, urge wrong motives to influence me. When I am convinced what my duty is, I must endeavor to perform it, though it should cost me the sacrifice of every worldly hope. You are a minister of the gospel, and you know the Saviour says, ‘He that loveth father and mother more than me, is not worthy of me.’ We must leave all to

follow him, for 'if ye love me, keep my commandments,' is the charge he has given to his people. I may never join the Baptist church, but I can never again commune with the Presbyterians. I have not been baptized, I know I have not, and how dare I come to the Lord's table?"

"But, Fannie—"

"O, Mr. Gordon, do not urge this upon me: I am fully convinced that I have never followed this command. I was sprinkled, I know, in infancy, but this was not baptism; and moreover, you know, Mr. Gordon, the Bible requires all to *believe* before they are baptized. I have always had my doubts respecting infant baptism, but now I feel not only that there is no virtue in it, but that it is wrong, essentially wrong."

"Will you not commune, then, at our next quarterly meeting, Fannie? You remember it commences next Friday. Surely you will do this?"

"No, I can not, Mr. Gordon, I can not; I feel that I have no right to that sacrament. I have not submitted to the ordinance which is a figure of his death, and it would be sacrilege in me to engage in that which 'shows forth his death till he come.'"

"But what will your father say, Fannie? you know how—"

"O, speak not to me of his opposition, Mr. Gordon. I know it all—all; and the thought of it bows my soul to the earth; and I believe that even now my resolution would give way in view of this, but whenever I am ready to falter, I seem to hear a voice whispering in my ear, 'Fear not, I am with you, my grace is sufficient for you.'"

She paused, overcome by her deep emotion. Mr. Gordon looked at her amazed. He had never before seen the strength of her principles tested. But now that he beheld her under the most painful trial manifesting the deepest affection, and, at the same time, the most unyielding steadfastness to right, exercising a maturity of judgment far beyond her years ; and all this crowned by the clear, trusting faith of a Christian, his admiration knew no limit. He felt a deeper, holier devotion for her than ever before, now that she seemed just ready to elude his love. They passed up the avenue in silence. Each heart was too full for utterance. Reaching the hall door, Fannie asked Mr. Gordon into her mother's room, and excusing herself, sought her own chamber. Mrs. Holmes observed the minister's agitation, but she seemed not to notice it.

"Did you see Mr. Holmes in town, Brother Gordon? He went down to look for you."

"I did not meet him, ma'am. Had he any particular business with me?"

"He wished to see you with regard to asking some two or three ministers to be present at our next communion." Her face assumed a sad look as she added, "you know we feel that a great deal depends upon that meeting."

"Yes, Sister Holmes, it is fraught with momentous consequences to us all. I have invited three other ministers beside Brother Robinson, who will certainly be with us. I feel exceedingly anxious with regard to the results, and hope they may be all we desire. But should our expectations be disappointed, we must endeavor to

be prepared for the worst," said he, drawing a deep, heavy sigh. "Is there any hope?"

"None, that I can see; Mr. Holmes intends to make a last effort before next Sabbath; but now that he has Edwin's influence to contend against, I have but little expectation that he will succeed. Yet you know we are commanded 'to hope all things, and to pray in faith,' Brother Gordon; but my faith is so weak, and I fear while I hope."

"How does John seem to be affected by the discussion of last night?"

"Well, I can not say. He was here a few minutes this evening, and he appeared very morose; more so than I have ever known him. I asked him if he was convinced, and his reply was, 'O, it is no use to talk about this matter any longer, the Baptists have it.'"

"I should think, now that his wife sees his growing indifference, she would be willing to avail herself of the only means which seems to promise any hope of restoring him."

Mrs. Holmes made no answer.

"I will hasten back to town; perhaps I may reach there before Brother Holmes leaves. And if I do not, I will mention this subject to him to-morrow."

The pastor took his hat, and, bidding Mrs. Holmes "good-evening," left. As he passed down the avenue he met old Mr. Holmes.

"I have just been down to the village in search of you," said the old gentleman as he encountered the minister. "I wanted to ask you if you don't think it will be best to invite several ministers to our next meeting? Brother Robinson will be here; I have just got

a letter from him ; and I think we should not only write, but insist upon two or three more to come."

"Whom shall we ask, Brother Holmes?"

"O, I will leave that with you. You know better than I do who will be most active and influential. Much depends on that meeting, Brother Gordon. The fact of the business is, if the thing ain't settled then, we had just as well give it over."

"Yes, I feel so ; suppose I ask Brother Stacy, Brother Green, and Brother Hill : they are all men of ability and talent, and I think they will come."

"Yes, yes, they will do first-rate. You could not make a better choice."

"I am afraid our discussion last night did not benefit John much. Sister Holmes tells me he appears unusually morose to-day, and thinks that we are defeated."

"O, he is so much influenced by his wife in this thing, that he could not do our side justice. I never saw a woman have such power over a husband, in all my life ; and if she would just come and join us, John would be back directly. The fact of the business is, she must do it. I am going to talk to her again next week, and show her, that if she don't commune with us, her husband will be a ruined man. I want to wait until the day before communion, so that she will have no time to argue herself out of the notion."

"How do you think Fannie was affected by the controversy ? You know that she has had doubts about her baptism since last spring. I am fearful she was rather strengthened in her views than otherwise."

"Pshaw ! I don't intend to give myself any trouble

they spoken together of their views, their fears, their hopes ; and their common sorrow rendered doubly strong the tie that already bound their hearts in the strongest friendship and tenderest sympathies.

It was a beautiful evening in November. The cloudless skies smiled down a glorious light and loveliness upon the peaceful earth, and the peaceful earth smiled back, though less gloriously, upon the gorgeous skies.

All earthly good is but a reflection of the heavenly, and, therefore, less intense ; and well it is that it is so. The Giver, in wisdom, has adapted it to our capacities.

All inanimate nature breathed that soft, still beauty, which we *feel*, but can not describe. But it was all a "sealed book" to Fannie as she trod with her father the little meadow path. The burden at her heart had shut out the glory of the outer world.

They reached the "Retreat," and found Grace alone, reading "Pilgrim's Progress ;" her Bible—the companion of many of her leisure hours—was open on the stand at her side. She had studied it far more carefully, prayerfully, ever since the evening of her mother's visit. In the fear of God she had sought to find out her duty.

She laid aside her book as they entered the door. Her eye rested on the face of her father, and her heart failed within her. She knew the cloud that enveloped his brow presaged the coming storm ; and she felt that upon *her* must be expended all his wrath.

While she and Fannie engaged in a restrained conversation, the old man sat with his head bent, as if cogitating how to begin his mission. At length looking up suddenly, he said, rather abruptly, "Grace, are you going to attend our meeting?"

The severity of his tone startled her, but she commanded herself as well as she could, and answered, "I shall attend, I suppose, during the day. But I have no one to go with me at night."

"Why, where is John? can't he go with you? he's not sick, is he?"

"No, sir, he is not sick; but you know Mr. Holmes does not love to go to church."

"And can't you make him go? I think any woman that has as much power over a husband as you have over John, might make him do just as she pleased."

"I never attempt to force Mr. Holmes to do any thing. I have endeavored to persuade him to go to church, but my efforts generally failed."

"Now, Grace, I am going to speak to you plainly; and what I am going to say is for your good as well as his, and I want you to listen to what I say;" and the old gentleman left his seat and took a chair by her side. "I want you to listen to my words, Grace, for I tell you they are true. There is but one way to bring John back, and that is for you to do your duty. I tell you there is no use holding out any longer, unless you want to be made a miserable woman, and see your husband ruined for life. You know we have tried every thing in our power to reclaim him, Grace; haven't we said all we could, and still you see it has done no good. I have talked to him, and prayed for him, and it only seems to make him worse; and now it depends upon you whether he will give up his ways and come back to the church. There is one thing you can do, and this is the only thing that can be done. And won't you, Grace, set aside all your notions, and make this one effort to save him?"

Surely you won't object any longer, when you know how much depends upon it. Try it for a few times, anyhow ; and then, if it does no good, you can give it up if you want to. I tell you there will be no sin in it, and it may save your husband. Will you do it, Grace ? tell me."

"How can I do it, father, when I believe it would be wrong ? And how can I know that it will have the desired effect even if I should do it ?"

"I tell you it will, take my word for it. I know it would have a more powerful effect on him than any thing else. Try it, child, and see if it don't."

"But, father, how can I do wrong ? Surely God will not bless me in such an act. I must not do evil that good may come ; this would be sinning in the face of God, and surely his wrath would be visited upon me. But if I could be convinced that I might take this step, O how gladly would I do it ; any thing to win back my husband to his duty," and the excited girl burst into tears.

Fannie took her hand in hers and pressed it warmly. She did not speak, but her silent tears told her heart's full sympathy.

"Grace, I tell you it's no use to cry !" said the old man, in a stern voice ; "you must make up your mind to do this thing and end the matter. It has gone on long enough !" and the old man grew more and more excited as he saw her tears. "I can't see why you won't ; there's nothing on earth in the way but your prejudice. You think it is wrong, just because you have been taught so. I tell you you needn't cry, it won't mend the matter one whit. I have told you your duty ; and

the fact of the business is, you must do it, or things will be dreadful ! Why, think, Grace ; what will people say when they know that your obstinate notions have kept you from doing what every body believes will save John ? They all know that it depends upon you ; and certainly you won't let them say that you would do nothing to keep your husband from being lost."

This was a new aspect of the matter to the sorrowing girl.

"And can it be," she asked herself, convulsively, "that every body thinks I am doing wrong ? must I be blamed by the whole world for acting according to my conscientious convictions ? No, no ; this can not—can not be. God will not deal thus severely with me. Man may blame me, but he will not withdraw his aid."

"You know our meeting begins to-night, Grace," resumed the old man, in a softer tone, "and Sunday will be our communion, and I want you to promise me now that you will come to meeting then, and commune with us. Will you do it, Grace, say ?"

"I will come to meeting, but I can not now promise you to commune. I must wait till then before I can decide."

"Tut, tut, what nonsense. You can't settle the matter now ? I should like to know why you can't. You don't expect to get any more enlightenment on the subject, do you ? The fact of the business is, I don't see what you want with any more ; it's just as plain to me that you ought to do it as that you are in that chair. What is the reason that *you* can't be convinced ?"

"I need not give you my reason, father, you know it

well enough. How can I commune with persons that have never been baptized ?”

“But I tell you they have been baptized, Grace, just as much as you have, and you have no right to say they haven’t ; it is nothing in this world but a head-strong disposition that keeps you from seeing it.”

“O, do not talk so, father, you will break Grace’s heart,” said Fannie, beseechingly. “She thinks she is right ; don’t prevail upon her to sin against her judgment.”

“You don’t pretend to say that coming to our table is a sin, Fannie ? is your head turned too ? I want to hear no more of this from you. If Grace will do wrong, it’s no reason why you should.”

Fannie saw that it was best to say no more. She could only bend on Grace a more tender, sorrowing look, and press her hand more closely. At this moment Aunt Peggy entered the room to get the keys, but seeing her young mistress in tears, and the angry face of her old master, as he scowled upon her, she remained silent, and took a seat near the door.

“Well, I can’t stay here all evening arguing with you, Grace ; and I want you to tell me now what you are going to do ! If you hold out in your stubbornness, you must expect to reap your reward ; and I tell you now, you needn’t look for any favor from me. I won’t look upon such conduct with any degree of allowance. If you are willing to give up your husband and your own happiness, and the peace of a family, for this foolish notion of yours, I want you to understand, that for one, I am not going to countenance you in it. What will you do ? I want you to tell me before I leave.”

"I will try to do my duty," sobbed out the weeping girl.

"Well, that's all I ask of you, Grace. Your duty is to come along and commune with us, and I shall expect to see you do it ;" and old Mr. Holmes snatched his hat from the table, and passed out before Grace could add a word of explanation.

As she heard the door slam behind the old gentleman, she burst into a fresh flood of tears. Fannie could not give her a word of consolation, but, throwing her arms about her sister's neck, she leaned her head on her bosom, and mingled her silent tears with those of the heart-broken mourner.

It was a sad, touching sight, to see this young martyr to principle folded in the arms of one scarce less a martyr than herself, who, by the silent eloquence of love, was endeavoring to bind up the broken spirit ; her own trials forgotten in her deep pity for the sorrows of one whom she cherished with a sister's heart. She heeded not the storm that was soon to burst upon her own defenseless head ; she only saw the desolations of that which was pouring its wrath upon the stricken one at her side. Aunt Peggy wisely forbore to say any thing while Grace was so deeply agitated. As soon as she saw that she had grown more calm, she moved her chair to her side, and said :

"Be of good cheer, Miss Gracey ; dis thy evil will all come right, arter a while. De blessed Lord will not forsake you, but will be wid you to de end, if you will only trust in him."

"O, Aunt Peggy, it seems that he has already forsaken me . my way appears so very dark before me. I

have prayed, and hoped, but it all seems vain ; this trouble can not be removed. O, why am I afflicted thus—why is the hand of his displeasure laid so heavily upon me ?”

“He wants to prove you, my chile, as he did the chil’ren of Israel in the wilderness. It all ’pears mity dark to you now, Miss Gracey, I know it does ; but wait a little bit, chile, and it will all be clar as dat sun in yonder pretty sky. You know, de very darkest hour of de night is always just afore de break of day ; and so it will be wid you, mark my words, chile ! De Lord ain’t forgot to be gracious, blessed be his holy name !”

“I know that, Aunt Peggy, I know that. God is always good. But perhaps I am wrong in this matter. You heard what father said, ‘that every body thinks I am doing wrong, and that if I persist in my course, I need expect no favor from him, and will bring my husband to ruin.’

“Well, don’t let dis distress you, Miss Gracey ; you remember what you read to me last Sunday evening, from dat sweet Psalm, so full of consolation : ‘When father and mother forsake me, den de Lord will take me up ;’ think on dis promise, Miss Gracey, it’s sure and steadfast ; and den remember, too, de dear Saviour himself said to his disciples : ‘Woe unto you, when all men shall speak well of you.’ We must have triberlations and trials in dis world dat we may have de exceedin’ great reward in de next. Dese things looks dark to you now, Miss Gracey, but de light will come afore long. Think what dat good song says dat we sung togeder last Sunday evening ; remember its precious words :

“ ‘ Judge not de Lord by feeble sense
 But trust him for his grace ;
 Behind a frowning providence
 He hides a smiling face.

“ ‘ His promises will ripen fast,
 Unfolding every hour ;
 De bud may have a bitter taste,
 But sweet will be de flower.’

De bud is very bitter to you, Miss Gracey, I know it is, chile, but de flower, when it comes, will be mity sweet. De Lord never forsakes his chil’re, blessed be his name.”

“ But, Aunt Peggy, suppose I am mistaken in my belief of what is my duty, you know God will never bless me in this course ; I can not expect it. If I should act differently, it might be the means of saving my husband ; all of his friends think so ; and, O, Aunt Peggy, to accomplish this, I would make any sacrifice ; would do any thing that is right.” And the weeping wife buried her face in her hands, and sobbed aloud. “ And you know, Aunt Peggy,” she added, after the outburst of her deep grief had somewhat subsided, “ that Baptists look upon Presbyterians as good Christian people, and the children of God, and agree with them on all the essential points of doctrine ; then why can’t I join with them in celebrating an ordinance which he has commanded *all* of his followers to observe ? How could there be any wrong in my doing this, Aunt Peggy ?”

“ Well, now, Miss Gracey, I will tell you how I looks upon it ; it ’pears to me like dis : I went down to de store last week to buy dat new calico gown you was a making dis mornin’, and arter de calico was rolled up, I

untied de corner of my hankercher an' gin Massa Ray, Miss Fannie's beau dare, a dollar ; he looked at it, and handed it back to me. I was took by surprise, I tells you, and said, ' Massa Ray 'ain't dat good silver ?' ' Yes, Aunt Peggy,' said he, ' it is good silver.' ' What do you mean, den ?' says I, ' I knows it is good and no counterfeiter, for I's rung it more'n a dozen times, and it's jes as clar as a bell ; why don't you take it, Massa Ray ?' ' It's good silver, Aunt Peggy, excellent stuff ;' said he, a kind a laughing. ' Well, I wish you would tell me what you mean,' says I, growin' more an' more puzzled ; ' if it is gennywine, what is de reason you don't keep it ? don't you take such money ?' ' Yes, Aunt Peggy, just as much of it as I can get. I wish I could have thousands of it every day.' ' Well, why don't you take it, den ?' ' Well,' said he, bustin' out into de biggest laugh you ever heerd, ' I don't take it, Aunt Peggy, just because it ain't a dollar, it wants five cents of it ; it's only a five franc piece.' Now, Miss Gracey, it's jes so wid Presbyterians ; dey is mity good silver, an' we Baptists is willin' to take dem for jes what dey is worth, but dey ain't a dollar, I tell you ! dey wants de five cents."

Grace and Fannie were forcibly struck with the old servant's apt illustration. For a moment neither of them made any reply. At length, as if a new thought had struck her, Fannie said :

" But, Aunt Peggy, if Mr. Ray had chosen, he could have taken your five franc piece, couldn't he ?"

The old woman saw the point in her question, and answered quickly,

" No, no, Miss Fannie, it is not lef' to Massa Ray to

do as he pleases in dis matter. Mr. Matthews 'spects him to mind what he says ; an' it is jes so wid us, we mus' follow de Master's command, we doesn't dar' to change it. If he had lef' us to do as we pleased, we might commune wid all Christian people, but you know he told all dat partakes of de emblems of his broken body and spilt blood *first to be baptized*, an' dis is de reason why we Baptists can never break bread wid dose dat has only been sprinkled. Don't you see dis, Miss Gracey ?"

"Yes, Aunt Peggy, it is all very clear, but what am I to do ?"

" 'Trust in de Lord,' old David said, 'an' he will bring it to pass ;' and so I say to you, Miss Gracey, trust in de Lord, and he will bring you out of all your troubles."

"O, that I knew what course to pursue !" said Grace, as old Aunt Peggy left the room. "Fannie, if I could but be convinced what is best, I would willingly give up any former prepossessions. Could I but see the finger of God pointing the way, I feel that I would gladly run therein, and not count any sacrifice too dear, that I might do his bidding. But all seems so dark, so incomprehensible, so past finding out ; I am as a man groping his way through a strange wilderness, without one mark of guidance, without one ray of light."

"O, say not so, sister ; our heavenly Father has promised to be a guide to all who put their trust in him ; and can't you lean on his promises, and feel willing to give this matter up to him ?"

"It appears to me that God has forsaken me, Fannie ;" and her tears flowed afresh. "I have en-

deavored to surrender myself into his hands, and to yield all to his direction. I have asked him to remove the cloud that has so long flung its mantle of blackness over me, but its thick darkness yet remains, and I know not whither to turn."

"I know it is hard, sister, for us to feel reconciled to our afflictions, but if we do not trust in God, where shall we find comfort and consolation? My pathway is very dark before me. I sometimes think my trials are more than I can bear." She paused a moment, and hid her face on the shoulder of Grace. "You know it all, sister," she added, in a tone of deep feeling; "I am young, and my trial is a very great one, and I would despair were it not for those precious words of heavenly love and comfort that I have heard from the lips of old Aunt Peggy ever since I can remember. She has taught me more to exercise faith than all the sermons I have ever heard. She is always ready with some promise full of love and hope."

"Yes, *I must*, I know I must, Fannie, commit all to the direction of him who guideth the weak in judgment, and who has said, 'He that trusteth in me shall never be put to shame.' We both need his protection and guidance in this, our dark trial, and here let us seek his blessing on our future course."

They both knelt, and Grace, amid sobs and tears, poured out her soul before him who "heareth the cry of the afflicted," and giveth peace to the troubled spirit. And the Comforter came, and poured the healing waters into her aching bosom. And when she arose, the look of anguish had given way to one of trust and resignation.

Neither one asked the other how she intended to act on the following Sabbath. Each had confidence to know that whatever step the other might take, it would proceed from a consideration of duty, and a desire to do the will of him whose "favor is life," and whose "loving kindness is better than life."

After tea her brother escorted Fannie home. When they reached the door they heard old Mr. Holmes speaking within in a very excited voice. Mr. Robinson being somewhat fatigued with the exercises of the day, had retired ; and the children had grown weary and sought rest ; so that there was no one left round the fire but Mr. and Mrs. Holmes. The first question advanced to Fannie by her father was—

"Why didn't you come to church to-night, Fannie ? I left you on purpose that you might bring Grace and John with you."

She hesitated a moment, not knowing how to answer. Her brother relieved her of her embarrassment, by replying, "that it was quite late before he reached home, and he did not feel disposed to go out again." A dark frown gathered over the old man's brow ; he seemed to be studying what to say next. At length, he broke the awful silence, by addressing Fannie in a voice by no means pleasant.

"I don't believe you wanted to come, Fannie. Brother Gordon has as well as told me to-night that you have made up your mind not to commune next Sabbath. Now I tell you, you had just as well give up all such foolish notions, for as long as you are under my roof I shall expect you to obey my wishes. It is perfectly ridiculous to think of any body acting so that has

been taught as well as you have. The fact of the business is, it is out of the question, and I want to hear no more of it. Do you understand me?"

She could make no reply; her heart was full to bursting. She waited a few moments, and finding her father made no further remark, she passed out of the room to her own chamber. Reaching it, she threw herself on a chair by the fire, and giving vent to her uncontrollable sorrow, she wept long without relief.

"O, why am I thus persecuted? what will the end of this be?" she asked herself; and from the depths of her stricken heart there came the hollow echo—"WHAT?"

She sat for some time reflecting upon her present position. But the more she thought the more bewildered she grew. "I will carry my troubles to God," and kneeling, she committed herself to the mercy of him who, "having suffered like unto us, is touched with a feeling of our infirmities, and who will not suffer us to be overcome, but, with the temptation, will also provide a way of escape." She rose from her knees, and, in a low, plaintive voice, sung the first and last two verses of that hymn, ever dear to her, which Aunt Peggy had taught her while she was yet a little child—

"Though dangers assail, and troubles affright,
Though friends should all fail, and foes all unite,
Yet one thing assures me, whatever betide:
The Scripture assures me, The Lord will provide.

"No strength of my own, or goodness I claim;
Yet since I have known the Saviour's great name,
In this, my strong tower, for safety I hide:
The Lord is my power, The Lord will provide.

"When life sinks apace, and death is in view,
The word of his grace shall comfort me through;
Not fearing, nor doubting, with Christ on my side,
I hope to die shouting, The Lord will provide."

Weary, and bowed down beneath a weight of grief,
she retired to her bed. The eye of faith could not
clearly pierce the dark veil that shut from her anxious
gaze the unsealed future, yet she trusted.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE QUARTERLY MEETING—THE TRIAL.

"I KNOW in whom I have trusted," the Christian exclaims, as the waves of sorrow sweep over his soul. "He hideth all his ways from me, and my footsteps stumble," sighs forth the same heart, as doubt throws over it the mantle of darkness, which, as a thick cloud, shuts out the smile of our Father's face, and leaves us to grope our way mid the wilderness of uncertainty, wherein there is no path.

In one situation, hope throws out her cheering light over the blackness of the future, and with unerring finger points the afflicted one to the goal of ultimate peace and blessedness. In the other, hope has departed ; the eye of faith is dim ; it can not pierce the rayless gloom which envelops the despairing soul, and from the depths of its anguish it sends up the burdened cry—"How long, O Lord, how long?"

After the conversation with old Mr. Holmes, Grace had been in the deepest distress. Her mind was racked with conflicting thoughts and fears. The words of her father had presented the matter to her in an aspect altogether different from what she had hitherto regarded it. She had known and felt that he would look upon her as the sole cause of her husband's wanderings ; but, acquainted as she was with his peculiar temperament,

and knowing the extent of his prejudice, she was convinced that she ought not suffer herself to be influenced to act contrary to her sincere convictions on account of this opinion. And while it gave her much unpleasantness, she had decided to pursue the course she had marked out for herself, and leave the results with God.

But doubt whispered, "her father was not alone in his opinion. Others thought as he did." "What must she do? What was her duty to God, to her husband, to herself? and how must this duty be performed?" With bursting heart and distracted mind she asked herself these questions. They were the burden of her every breath. The morning dawn found them pressing down her sinking soul; the midnight hour saw them resting there with accumulated weight. Sleep visited not her eyes, nor slumber her eyelids; for she could not find the "sure mercies" which would have been "a lamp to her feet, and a light to her path," to guide her through the bewildering maze of doubt and fear which shut in on every side the thorny way her feet *must* press. And hourly went up the prayer from her tortured heart—"How long wilt thou forget me, O Lord—forever? How long wilt thou hide thy face from me? How long shall I take counsel in my soul, having sorrow in my heart daily?"

Old Aunt Peggy, with the quick instinct of love and sympathy, fully understood her young mistress's distress, and entered deeply into her sorrows. She endeavored, in her plain, kind way, to give consolation and encouragement; but her words, usually so full of comfort and direction, seemed now as sand thrown against the polished adamant—as the feeble efforts of the infant's hand to bend the unstrung bow.

Grace attended church on Saturday morning, and listened, as well as her distracting thoughts would permit her, to a sermon from Mr. Stacy, from these words of Jude: "It was needful for me to write unto you, and to exhort you, that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered to the saints." And as he impressed upon all present "not to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them," but with faithfulness and zeal to endeavor to show forth the "first principles of the oracles of God," she found herself continually asking, "Do I understand these 'first oracles?' Is mine the faith once delivered to the saints?" Her perplexities only increased under these interrogatories, and when, at the close of the sermon, she left the church, it was with her thoughts more bewildered, her feelings more uncertain, her heart more burdened than ever.

In the evening, Fannie ran over to see her a little while; she felt anxious to know the state of her sister's feelings, and to impart to her her own. When she reached the "Retreat," she found her brother preparing to go down to the village, and Grace making a memorandum of articles she wished him to buy.

Grace was wearing the same sweet, pleasant face, but the sadness of the heart had robbed it of its wonted cheerfulness. Like the transparent cloud, it had shut out the radiance, but the light was still there. The brother's manner was restrained, and his voice unnatural, as he said, in a tone of assumed pleasantness,

"I will not be gone long, Fan., and you will stay with Grace until I get back."

"Why should he have thus partially excused him-

self?" She looked upon herself as one of the family, not as a visitor, to whom such courtesy was due. His manner was strange, unaccountable.

"You will have to be in great haste, John, or I shall be gone before you return. Mother is very busy this evening, and I must soon be back to help her. I stole away only for a few minutes."

"I came, sister," said she to Grace, as the door closed behind her brother, "to ask you what you are going to do to-morrow? Have you determined on your course?"

"No, Fannie, I have not. *I can not*. I have looked at the matter in all the different lights I am capable of doing, and it is as dark and formless to me as ever. I believe, if I understand my own heart, that I desire to do what is right, but I can not ascertain what this is. You remember your father said that every body feels it is my obstinacy that has driven your brother to pursue the course he has done for the last few months, and if this is true, I am compelled to think that I have erred in some way. I can not see how, for I feel that I have striven to do right, but it must be that I have been misled."

"I think father is mistaken, sister, with regard to public opinion. He himself firmly believes that your refusing to commune with John has caused him to act as he has done; but I know of no one else that thinks as he does. Mother *fears* it, and hopes that by yielding you may be able to draw him back to the church. Mr. Gordon advocates the step on the same grounds; but Cousin Ed. and I don't for a moment suppose it will have any such effect. We know that Mr. Hastings has

been the means of leading him astray, and that he will not leave off his present habits, until he is convinced that they are wrong. John has always approbated the manner in which you have acted. He has often told me 'that he was glad you had firmness enough to cling to your principles,' and he has said the same thing to Cousin Ed. As to the general opinion about his indifference to religion, I believe every one thinks as Cousin Ed. does, that Mr. Hastings's influence has led to it all."

"Do you really suppose, Fannie, that your father has suffered himself to be deceived? and is he really mistaken with regard to what others say about the matter? If I could but be sure of this, what relief it would give me; I would then, at least, be able to think upon the subject with some degree of calmness; but whenever I have endeavored to view it so as to decide what to do, those horrid words, 'every body thinks you are doing wrong,' would obtrude themselves, and I could go no further. They wrapped the whole affair in a mantle of indecision, and I was left just where I begun."

"I am confident, sister, that what I have told you is true, and I assure you it will be wrong in you to let this consideration influence you another moment."

"Well, then, I will try to dismiss this thought from my mind, and to look at both sides of the question faithfully and prayerfully, and perhaps I shall then be enabled to decide what to do. But tell me, Fannie, are you not going to commune?"

"I dare not, Grace; I have never been baptized."

"And have you told your father of your determination?"

"No, I can not."

"Does Mr. Gordon know it?"

"I have told him several times that I could never commune again, that I had never been baptized ; but I do not believe he feels that I have decided not to do so."

"But, Fannie, what will your father say ? what will he do ?"

"I can not tell, sister ; I can not think on his anger ; it makes my heart sink within me and my head reel to look at the consequences. You know they will be very disastrous to me ; will destroy all my earthly hopes ; but I must do what I know to be right, Grace, let it cost what it may of sorrow and suffering, and leave the results in his hands to whom I have committed myself. It is a hard trial ! O, you know not how hard !" and she turned upon Grace a look of painful determination, which revealed the deep struggles and dark anguish of her heart far more surely than any language could have spoken it.

"And you have fully decided, Fannie?"

"Yes, I believe it is my duty in the sight of God, and with prayers, and tears, and maddening doubts, I have resolved to do it."

"You will suffer much, my dear, but I hope God will give you grace to bear it all. As you have determined upon it in his fear and to honor his name, he will give you strength to support you amid the direst afflictions that can come upon you ; for he has promised, 'As thy day, so shall thy strength be.'"

"And this is my only hope, sister. I know, I fully realize, that father will be greatly displeased ; and that it will grieve mother's heart, and bring sorrow to my own

bosom, and to another ; but I could not profane the solemn ordinance of the Lord's house, by partaking of it without any right or authority. If you could know all the doubts, all the anguish I have endured in the last week, you would wonder that I am now so calm ; but it is all over, and I will not recall it."

"Would that I could see what is best for me to do ; could decide, as you have done, how to act. But I fear I can not. I must wait until the last moment, until the choice is before me, and leave it with God to determine for me."

"He will then be wisdom unto you, sister. 'In six trials I will be with thee, and in the seventh I will not forsake thee.' I know you will do right if you but commit yourself to his guidance."

"The time is at hand, Fannie ; only a few hours, and the decision will be irrevocably made. The thought makes my very soul tremble."

"Remember me in your prayers, sister ;" and Fannie kissed the burning cheek of Grace ; and throwing on her shawl and sun-bonnet, hastened home.

Sabbath morning came. The clear, solemn peals of the church bell rung out on the stillness, and Grace started from her seat. She had prepared herself for church when she made her morning toilet ; and while her husband and Mr. Lewis, who had returned home with him from the village the evening before, walked out into the lawn, she had taken her Bible and sat down to read its words of wisdom and love, and to feed upon its sure and comforting promises. She arose, put by the book, and kneeling by the bed-side, offered up a silent prayer for direction and strength, to do the will

of him who hath made a covenant of mercy with his people, which shall forever endure. She was slightly agitated as she put on her bonnet. The low, deep notes of the bell were still ringing in her ear, sounding to her beating heart like a summons to an unpleasant duty. She waited a few minutes for her husband and Mr. Lewis, who, warned by the voice of the bell, had left off their morning walk and were returning to the house. They noticed her heightened color as she met them at the door, and the tremulousness of her voice reached their ear as she made some casual remark about the hour.

As they walked to church she occasionally joined in the conversation between her husband and Mr. Lewis, relative to the comparative merits as preachers, of Mr. Gordon and Mr. Stacy, but it was evident that her mind was engaged with other thoughts than the relative capacities of the two ministers.

As they were ascending the street to the church, they saw before them Mr. and Mrs. Holmes and Mr. Gordon, while a few steps in the rear walked Fannie, accompanied by Mr. Stacy. He was engaged in earnest conversation with her, and Grace readily saw from his manner, that he was entreating her to do something. Quick as the lightning's darting ray it flashed across her mind. Mr. Gordon had imparted his distress and fears to Mr. Stacy, and he was endeavoring to persuade Fannie to change her determination. Grace did not hear the words of the conversation, but she knew from the increasing earnestness of his manner, that Fannie was not likely to be convinced.

Although the hour was so early, the church was

pretty well filled when she entered. There was no seat for her in her accustomed pew, so she found one near the window. It chanced to be the same she had occupied on that never-to-be-forgotten morning of communion, six months before. Now, as then, the table was spread in front of the pulpit ; but she looked not on it, as in days gone by, with kindling feelings of thankfulness and love to him who had left her this memorial of his body pierced for her sins—of his blood poured out for her redemption. Instead of emotions of gratitude and praise, there arose thoughts of trial and pain. She turned sorrowfully from it to look through the window on the prospect beyond.

What a current of thought swept through her mind ; what a tide of emotion heaved her bosom as her eye rested on the scene. How changed it was ! *Then* it was all light and beauty ; for the life-giving hand of spring had touched it with glowing charms, and clothed it in robes of gorgeous loveliness. *Now* the autumn winds sighed mournfully over the desolation their chilling breath had wrought ; and the seared and yellow grass and leafless boughs of the sugar-trees and elms, spoke to the observing mind of decay and death.

“ And I, too, am changed even as that meadow,” said Grace, as she dwelt upon its dreary aspect. “ Springing hopes have withered in my bosom, even as the dead verdure which now clothes its lifeless form. Joys have been torn from my heart, and been crushed to the earth like these decaying leaves from their stems. Surely, with the prophet, I can say, ‘ All flesh is grass, and all the goodness thereof is as the flower of the field. The grass withereth, the flower fadeth.’ ”

This train of sad reflection was interrupted by the voice of Mr. Robinson, as he arose to offer up the morning prayer.

A hymn was sung, and Mr. Green announced his text : “ Thus saith the Lord, the King of Israel, and his Redeemer, the Lord of hosts ; I am the first, and I am the last ; and besides me there is no God.” (Isai., xliv. 6.)

The crowded house paid undivided attention to the words of the gospel as they fell from the lips of the faithful deliverer of God’s message of mercy to his fellow-creatures, to fallen man.

Mr. Green was a man of deep piety and fervent zeal, with a heart overflowing with love to God and to his fellow-men ; and a mind highly cultivated, and well stored with the knowledge of the Scriptures. Joined to these, he possessed a fine voice and an attractive manner ; and his brilliant eye, when lighted up by the fire of holy zeal, and the earnest expression of the whole face, accompanied in tones of silent, beseeching eloquence, the words of truth and righteousness to which his ardent soul gave utterance in language plain, yet powerful. He sought to do his Master’s work ; to preach the gospel as the Scriptures reveal it to us ; to comfort the people of God under the afflictions which beset the way of life ; to warn sinners of their impending danger—even the curse of the law—unless they become reconciled to God through the death of his Son. He preached “ Christ crucified”—not himself ; unfolded to the ears of dying man the mysteries of redemption—not the intricacies of philosophy and the discoveries of science ; taught them the laws of our spiritual life—not those that govern the physical ; led the soul into the

green pastures of God's promises, and by the still waters of his never-failing goodness, and not into the flowery meads of science, and by the fountain of classic learning. He felt that he was called to preach the gospel. Then how dare he turn aside to follow the many inventions of man, merely that he might please those that have "itching ears?"

He was regarded as one of the best preachers in that whole section of country, and the people of his charge looked upon him as one pre-eminently qualified to expound to them the law of the Lord perfectly. His fame had gone through all the surrounding country, and whenever it was known that he was to preach, hundreds came to hear him.

His deep rich tones fell on the ear of Grace, and for a moment fixed her attention. But her heart would not take in the meaning of his burning words—that heart could hold no more—it was now full to overflowing. For a while, she endeavored to follow him as he spoke of the power and majesty of Jehovah, but she found the attempt vain, so she gave up the effort entirely.

All was silent. She looked, and the speaker had taken his seat.

Mr. Gordon descended from the pulpit; the other ministers followed. Mr. Robinson, the eldest, remained at the table, while the others took seats in the front pew. A song was sung, and the invitation given to those who designed to participate in the ordinance to take seats in the middle block.

Grace bowed her head, but remained still. She knew that many anxious eyes were resting upon her, and her

agitation increased every moment. She could not see Fannie, who sat a few seats behind her in the body pews, but she felt that she too was looking upon her with earnest eye and throbbing heart. Her husband remained silent by her side ; no word, no look, no movement of his gave any intimation of his feelings. . Old Mr. Holmes, who sat in the seat with his daughter, fastened such a steady gaze upon Grace as to attract the attention of all around him. Mrs. Holmes bent her head in earnest prayer. This was her refuge mid all her distresses.

Old Mr. Holmes could stand it no longer : the song was almost sung, and Grace and her husband remained fixed in their seats. Murmuring to himself a few words, he rose to go to them. Fannie observed the movement, and checked it by a gentle pull at his coat-skirt. "Don't father," she said, eagerly, "let them stay where they are, perhaps—"

She could say no more, lest she should lead her father to believe what was not so. The old man sat down still murmuring to himself, while the knit brow gathered darkness.

The ever-changing light and shade of Mr. Gordon's face would have betrayed to any one acquainted with the circumstances, the intensity of the feelings that were tumultuously sweeping through his bosom, but luckily his brother preachers were totally unconscious of any cause of unhappiness to the young pastor. He had seated himself at the end of the pew, and partially turned, so that, without being observed, he might see Fannie. Her eye met his, but she mastered her emotion, and his searching look was returned by one so

calm, so free from agitation, that he knew not what to think.

Such was the attitude of the parties when, the song being ended, Mr. Robinson lifted up his voice in prayer. Their minds teemed with distracting doubts and fears, instead of being fixed by faith on Jesus, who was made a propitiation for their sins, having given himself to die, that they through his death—that death which they were now about to commemorate—might open up a way from the grave to the mansions of eternal light and blessedness.

As soon as the amen was pronounced, Mr. Holmes again fixed his eyes on Grace, who remained with her head bowed upon her hand. The Mediator was communing with her from off the mercy-seat. Mr. Gordon looked through his hand at Fannie, who preserved the same quiet, peaceful countenance. She avoided turning in the direction of him ; and, with her father, directed her attention to Grace.

Deacon Dodge passed slowly up the aisle. At length he reached Mr. Holmes's pew. How violently did the heart of the minister beat as he saw Fannie receive the plate from her father, who handed it without turning his head. He, poor, unsuspecting man, was entirely unconscious of his daughter's determination. He had rested secure in the thought, as he had expressed it to Mr. Gordon, "that a daughter of his would not think of doing such a thing." Fannie passed the plate to her mother ; she raised her head and broke a piece from the loaf. "She will partake after her mother !" But the plate reached the deacon's hand, and she had not partaken !

The pastor heaved a deep sigh, and his soul sunk within him ; he buried his face in his hands while a wild rush of feeling shook his whole frame. " And she will not commune, she will not commune !" he repeated to himself, while in that fearful sentence there seemed to be summed up the unhappiness of all his coming life. He did not raise his head again during the service, except to receive the wine.

As Deacon Dodge returned from the rear of the house, old Mr. Holmes touched his arm, and, whispering a few words in his ear, pointed to where his son sat. The deacon stepped to the pew. How eagerly did the old man's eyes follow every movement ; and Fannie, too, gazed earnestly. Mr. Lewis received the plate from the deacon, and handed it to his cousin. He merely shook his head, preserving his unchanged expression. Mr. Lewis looked at the deacon, who nodded to him to hand it to Grace. Reaching past her husband, he gently touched her and presented the bread. She looked up and slowly shook her head.

The expression of old Mr. Holmes's face, as the deacon turned away, was truly fearful to behold. Disappointment, anxiety, vexation, mingled in the flashing eye, and clouded the knitted brow. " She would not commune, and John was lost." A faint smile for a moment lighted Fannie's face, as she exclaimed to herself, " She has done right, thank God for it." Mrs. Holmes saw Grace's refusal, and bowed her head in silent grief.

Prayer was again offered. The wine was poured, and the deacons received the cups from the tremulous hand of the aged minister.

Mr. Holmes took the cup from Deacon Dodge, and

having partaken himself, almost unconscious of what he was doing, he passed it across Fannie to his wife. He waited for his daughter to take it, which she did, and offered it to him. She trembled in every nerve as she saw her father's eye fastened upon her. "Drink, Fannie," said the old man, in a half audible tone.

"I dare not, father," and she gave the cup into the deacon's hand, and burying her face in her handkerchief, burst into tears. The current, in its silent, onward course, had every moment gathered strength, and now it burst its bands, and rolled on in uncontrollable might.

Fannie's act was the *ultima thule* of her father's surprise and anger. He could scarcely believe the evidence of his own senses. The thoughts and resolutions that filled his mind during the remainder of the services we will not attempt to describe. No language of ours could do them justice.

The cup was handed to Grace. She gently beckoned it away ; and, as she did so, her over-burdened bosom found relief in a deep-drawn sigh.

She had heard the voice of the exalted One whispering in her ear, "Be of good cheer. Commit thy ways unto me ; I will bring light out of this darkness. I will go before thee, and make the crooked places straight. Follow me, and I will give peace unto thy soul. Fear not, fear not what man can do unto you, for I am with you always, even unto the end." And she obeyed the voice of the divine bidding ; grace was given her to triumph over doubt and fear, and she rested secure in the promises of the faithful One, even the great I AM, whose arm had wrought out her deliverance.

Then, with David, she sung :

"I trusted in the Lord! and he hath heard my cry;

I have trusted in thy mercy! my heart shall rejoice in thy salvation.

He hath remembered his mercy and his truth; therefore shall my soul
praise him."

Fannie passed hastily from the church, and walked home rapidly alone. She had seen that her father was greatly excited, and she knew that it would be hard for him to control his feelings; so she thought it best to avoid his presence until his anger should somewhat subside.

Reaching her chamber, she threw aside her bonnet and shawl, and falling into a large arm-chair by the bed-side, she buried her face in her hands, and burst into a flood of tears. She had succeeded, by great effort, in stifling her emotions as she walked home; had kept them from an outburst, by the force of will, lest some prying eye might detect her sorrow, and some thoughtless tongue spread it abroad. But now that she was alone in her own room, with no earthly eye upon her, the torrent burst forth with redoubled fury, having gained additional strength and impetuosity from the vent that had stayed its course.

For some minutes she did not think—*could not*; she could only *feel*—feel that she had committed an irrevocable deed, which must bring sorrow to her mother's gentle, affectionate heart—had incurred her father's heavy displeasure—had, with her own hand, thrown a vail of impenetrable darkness over all the joy and happiness the future had so brightly promised—a vail which no earthly power could draw aside.

"Yes," she exclaimed, as her bewildered thoughts began to arrange themselves, "it is done ! and I have sealed with my own hands the deed which shall forever take away from me all earthly good ; all present joy, all future hope is gone, *forever gone !* And henceforth I must bear unkindness and reproach ; must buffet, and alone too, the fierce tide of opposition which I must daily, yes, hourly, meet ! How can I do it ? how can I do it ? And I have brought sorrow to this once happy home, have wounded my mother's heart, and aroused in my father's bosom feelings which shall rest only in the quiet of the grave. If I have done wrong, O Lord, forgive my sin, but if I have acted in thy fear, and by thy guidance, O, give me strength to sustain me through all my troubles. Let me not turn back, though all things oppose me ; let me not falter, though the way be rough and hard ; O, give me grace to say,

" 'Thy call I'll obey, like Abraham of old,
Not *knowing my way*, but faith makes me bold :
For though I'm a stranger, I have a sure guide—
For I know in all danger the Lord will provide.' "

And for what have I done all this ?" she asked herself, as she retrospected the past. "What can I hope to accomplish by not communing ? I can not change the views of any one ; my friends will all look upon it either as a foolish notion, or as a blind mistake. For what, for what, have I brought this great sorrow on myself ?" Doubt answered, "For *naught*." Faith whispered, "To do his will ;" but her voice was so faint, that it was scarcely heard through the roar of tumultuous billows that swept over her soul, and Doubt tri-

umphed. And as she looked out upon the gloom of the prospect before her, fear seized upon her very being and wrapped the scene in the darkness of despair.

How often thus, does Doubt—the usurper—overthrow the strongholds of resolution, and lay waste beneath his destroying footstep all the comfort, all the hope we had laid up in store for future years.

How often, with unflinching eye and heart full nerved, we go forth to meet the impending danger ! How courageous we are, how determined to fight the battle valiantly ! We fear not man, we distrust not ourselves ! We rejoice in our strength, and bid defiance to all contending foes ! But the battle fought—the victory won ; and behold the dire results. A train of fearful consequences we looked not for, we could not foresee, comes rushing on, and we stand amazed, confounded, at the effects we ourselves have wrought. And yet, we would not recall the deed—would not undo what has been done—would only step aside that we might thus avoid the train of fearful sufferings it must inevitably produce. Strange, incomprehensible humanity, who can solve thy Sphynx-like riddle ?

As soon as her father reached home, he sought out Fannie. He could have no peace of mind until her conduct was explained. Showing the ministers into the parlor, he hastened to find her.

“She went up-stairs when she came home, sir, from meetin,” answered Diamond to his inquiry.

He sought her room by the private stairway. As he entered, she was sitting in the old arm-chair with her head resting on her hand, and her eyes red and swollen with weeping. She started to rise from her seat, but

he motioned her to be still ; unconsciously she obeyed his bidding. She saw in a moment that the anger she had aroused, had not been subdued, nor quieted. His face was flushed, his brow knit, and his manner unusually agitated.

He stood before her. She trembled beneath his look. How could she answer him ? no explanation that she might make, could satisfy the demands of his outraged feelings.

“ Give me thy strength, O God ! ” she mentally exclaimed, and burst into a fit of weeping. The old man stood irresolute. He wanted to ask her why she had acted as she had done, but he knew not how to begin.

“ And well you may cry,” at length he said, as he frowned upon her ; “ well you may cry for what you have done this day, and if tears could wash away your sin, I would tell you to cry on for a few days to come. But it will do no good ; all the tears you can shed will not undo your deed, you can not call it back now. But I want you to tell me what made you do so. I could scarcely believe my own eyes, when I saw you pass the wine to Mr. Dodge without drinking. And didn’t you take any bread, either ? Say, didn’t you commune at all, Fannie ? ”

She hesitated to answer.

“ Tell me ; I ask you, didn’t you commune at all this morning ? ”

“ No, father, I did not, I *could not*,” she sobbed out, while her heart was well-nigh breaking under its weight of anguish.

“ And why couldn’t you ? ” asked the old man, in a voice of increased sternness.

"Because I had no right to commune ; I have never been baptized."

"But you have been baptized, I tell you—you have been baptized ; and this is no excuse," and the old man's face grew darker as he thought of her presumption.

She answered not. As the flower before the crushing blast, so she crouched beneath her father's dark anger.

"Haven't I told you a hundred times that you have been baptized, and you do not dispute my word, do you ?"

"No, father, I would not dispute your word. But I can not think that was baptism, as the Bible teaches it."

"Don't you think sprinkling is baptism ? why, you haven't got your head turned too, have you ?"

She looked up at him, while tears streamed down her burning cheeks, as she answered,

"No, father, I do not, I can not believe that sprinkling is what Christ meant by baptism, and even if I could, I can not think that babies have any right to it. The Bible says, 'Believe, and be baptized,' and I could not believe."

"And don't you intend to commune with your church any more ?"

"I dare not, believing as I do now."

"What ! is it possible that you are going to persist in this foolish thing ? Think what it will bring you to ; you surely have not considered the consequences ; I tell you you had better look at this thing well, and make up your mind to do right. The fact of the business is,

you have got to commune ; no daughter of mine shall tell me she hasn't been baptized, while I know she has, for I have seen it done with my own eyes. Do you hear me, Fannie ?”

“Yes, sir.”

“Well, that's sufficient. I tell you again”—and his eyes flashed more intensely, while his voice grew louder and more severe—“no child of mine shall act in this way about me, and you had just as well give it up now. No body can stay about me, who follows such a course as you have taken. I will not put up with it. You understand me, do you ?” and the old gentleman turned suddenly and left the room, slamming the door behind him most violently.

CHAPTER XIX.

A CHAPTER OF EVENTS.

THERE was a great stir at the "Retreat." Active preparations were going on from the up-stairs to the cellar, throughout the length and breadth of the little cottage-home. Grace and Fannie, old Aunt Peggy and Jane, were all as busy as busy could be, in forwarding the work. Sweeping, dusting, scouring, polishing, and arranging, were each receiving their meed of attention. No nook or corner, from the most hidden recess of the cosiest of little bed-chambers at the head of the passage stairway, to the darkest niche of the milk-cellar, but what was visited by the insatiable Shaker broom, as it cried, "*Give, give;*" and no shred, nor mite of dust dared resist its rapacious demand. No hiding-place was found for them mid this besom of the destruction of their right of possession; and forth they came to mingle in the general tide which was fast flowing on, to be swallowed up by the flames of the kitchen fire-place.

Nicely-washed curtains were hung to shade bedroom windows, whose shining panes showed no trace of speck nor stain. Snowy huckaback counterpanes enveloped the forms of the smoothest, most squarely-made beds, which supported bolsters and pillows, encased in slips of virgin purity, and ornamented with nicely-fluted jac-

onet ruffles. The cherry wash-stands, and tables, and Windsor chairs, received, from the ever-busy duster, the highest luster it was possible for them to have.

The two bed-chambers above, and Father Miller's room, as the cosy little room at the head of the stairway was designated, having been duly set in order, they descended to the parlor, which, in its turn, underwent a thorough sweeping, and dusting, and rubbing. And the knobs of the shovel and tongs having passed through Aunt Peggy's careful hand, rested on either side of the fire-place, grinning on each other with the very intensity of rubbed-up brassiness, which, however, was entirely eclipsed by the superabundant impudence of the andirons at their feet.

"Well, this is ra'al sweet, Miss Fannie, I declar'," exclaimed old Aunt Peggy, as, with the most smiling of faces, she peered into the parlor, just as her young mistress was giving the last touches to the books on the shining cherry center-table. "It does seem most a pity, I declar', to have dem bright han'irons blackened up agin ; dey looks so shiny now, don't dey, Fannie, dear ? Our Jane is a purty good han' at sich work ; dey ra'ally does her credit ; I will jes put dat wood a leetle further back, so dey won't git burnt. I wants every thing kep' mighty nice while Miss Gracey's friends is here. I wants dem to see she is as good a housekeeper as any body, if she is so young."

"I will have an eye to the andirons, Aunt Peggy, and see that they are not unnecessarily burned. But you know they can not escape altogether."

"Yes, yes, chile, I knows dat ; an' when dey begins to look black, I will make Jane take dem at night, arter

you has all gone out of dis room, an' one of de boys will rub 'em up, an' she can bring 'em back, afore any body's up."

"A very good arrangement, Aunt Peggy."

"How purty dem white muslin curtains looks, tied back to dem leetle behog'ny knobs, with dere red tassels ; nobody could tell 'em from new ones. Jane is gittin' to be a good han' to do up muslins, too ; don't you think so, Miss Fannie ?"

"She is indeed, Aunt Peggy ; she has improved very fast, under your instructions. When she left us, last spring, she could scarcely do up a pocket-handkerchief fit for use."

"Ah, yes ! I was once a cap'tal han' at all sich work, Fannie, dear. Nobody in all de country roun' had sich white dresses as your mother, and Miss Susan, an' Miss Ann. But dat day is past wid me. I'm too ole now ! Poor Miss Ann ! I done up all her weddin' close for her when she got married ; an' dey did look so white and purty. Dey tells me she was berri'd in some of dem, jes as I had done 'em up."

"Did Aunt Ann die so soon after she was married, Aunt Peggy ? I thought she lived several months."

"Only three mont's, Fannie, dear. She was took sick as dey went out to Miss'ury, and she died soon arter dey got dare. Your Uncle John wrote dat she was nebber well a day arter she left home."

"Did she go out to live, or to see Aunt Jane ?"

"To live, chile ; your Uncle John had a farm out dare before he was married, an' arter dey had gone to see all de relations here, dey started out, an' dey jes did get dare afore she died. You was so young you

can't 'member any thing about it. You wa'n't more'n three year old when Miss Jane died. But I mus' leave you, chile : whar's Miss Gracey ? I wants to git some sugar for de pies. I thinks we is a goin' to have some cap'tal pies. Jane is a-doin' her best, I tell you !"

"I can't tell you, Aunt Peggy, where sister is ; perhaps she is up-stairs, in Father Miller's room. She told me a few minutes before you came in, that she was going to take her easy-chair up for the old gentleman to sit in."

Aunt Peggy did not feel inclined to go up the steps, so she concluded to wait a few minutes for her young mistress to come down, and continued the conversation :

"An' dey will all be here to-night, Miss Fannie ? and Miss Gracey's ma is comin' too, I b'leaves ?"

"Sister does not certainly expect Mrs. Truman before next week. But Annie Gray and her brother are coming with Father Miller. You remember Annie, don't you, Aunt Peggy ?"

"Yes, dat I do ; and a sweet girl she is, Fannie dear ; always so happy and so kind ; I shall be mighty glad to see Miss Annie ; an' I wish Massa Ed. would take a likin' to her ; I think she would make him a fust-rate wife, don't you ? But don't you tell her I said so ; she might think I am a meddlin' with what don't concern me. But, to tell de truth, I do wish he would ; don't you, Miss Fannie ?"

"I love Annie very much, and I don't know of any one that I would prefer for a cousin, Aunt Peggy."

"An' when does de meetin' begin, to-morrow or next day ?"

"To-day is Wednesday, isn't it ?"

"Yes, marm, dat it is ; how fast dis week has run by !"

"Well, the meeting will begin to-morrow night."

"An' whar is ole Massa Miller agoin' to preach ? In your meetin'-house ?"

"O no, Aunt Peggy, not in the Presbyterian church ; you know they have preaching there every Sabbath themselves. Mr. Gordon announced last Sabbath night that he would preach either in the court-house or in the little Methodist church near the creek. Cousin Ed. will ascertain to-day, so that it will all be arranged before Father Miller gets here."

"Well, I am 'joiced to know dat he is shoorly a comin' ; it has bin many a day since dese ole ears has listened to Baptis' preachin' ; but I hain't forgot how it soun's. How ole Massa Jinkins, dat good ole man, used to tell de story of de cross to sinners, an' many udder tings dat I couldn't understand ; but he never lef' dis out : how Christ must need die for poor sinful man ; an' how he give up his life for us poor sinners, an' how he hung on de shameful tree dat we might 'scape torment, an' go to live wid him forever in hebin, whar dar is no sickness, nor sorrow, nor cryin', but perfec' joy and happiness forever. An' de tears war streamin' down his face all de time he told of our Saviour's sufferin', and his voice was almost stopped by his feelin's ; an' den when he was thro' he would come down out of de pulpit, an' he an' all de breddren and sisters would shake han's wid each udder while dey sung 'Amazin' Grace,' or 'Am I a soldier of de Cross ?' so sweet, 'twas enuf to make you long to go to hebin, whar de saints dere sings far sweeter dan we poor mortals kin. Ah, dem was happy

days to dis ole heart," and Aunt Peggy took up the corner of her check apron to wipe away the tears these blessed memories caused to start ; " I never 'spects to see sich times agin, Fannie dear, but I blesses de Lord for dese."

" O, yes, Aunt Peggy, you will see such times again, no doubt. If Father Miller should organize a church here—and I suppose he will—you can again have the happiness of worshipping with your own people."

" Ah, Fannie dear, but dey can't be to me what dem good people was, dat I knowed so long, ever since I knowed myself, I might say. I feel dem days kin never cum back agin. I'se a very ole wumman now, and can't 'spect to be here much longer ; I'se lookin' every day for de Master to cum and call mè home, an' I don't kere, chile, how soon he sends his messenger for me ; I longs to be wid my Saviour in dat manshun he has prepared for me. I shall grieve mightily to leave you all—you and Miss Gracey, and Miss Marg'ret, and Massa John, an' de childrun, yes, an' ole massa, too ; for you has all bin mighty kind to me, but my Jesus has bin much kinder, and I'se gettin' ole now, an' of no account ; an' dis world has no charms for me skercely, an' I'se ready to gin it all up at any time, bless de Lord."

" O, Aunt Peggy, don't talk so, you make me sad ; you are not *very* old, and may live a good many years yet."

" No, no, chile ; I know well dat I can't be here much longer ; if I lives to see next Easter, I'll be sixty-eight years ole ; dat's a long time, chile, to live on dis earth ; an' dese weak han's and tottery steps tells me dat I mus' soon go de way of all de 'arth. But I bless de

Lord dat he has taken away from me all de fear of death and de dark grave. * * * But I mus' go, chile, an' find Miss Gracey, I wants to do all I kin while I lives."

"Did you wish to see me about any thing, Aunt Peggy?" said Grace, appearing at the foot of the stairway as the old servant emerged from the parlor.

"Yes, Miss Gracey ; I wants to git some sugar for de pies in dis bockey," and she exhibited the little wooden bowl, as white as pine could be, which she had been holding in her hand during her conversation with Annie.

"How nice you an' Miss Fannie is a makin' every thing look, Miss Gracey ; I declar' it's a'most sweet enuf to eat. It does my ole eyes good to see how clean an' tasteful dat little parlor is , I wants things to be in fust-rate order while your people is here, for I wants dem to see you kin keep house as well as any body, if you hasn't bin 'bout it long." And she followed her young mistress with cautious step over the nicely-swept carpet, as if fearful her clean shoes might deposit a particle of dust.

Her want attended to, she moved with the same careful tread through the dining-room to the kitchen, and not until she had passed its threshold did she feel at liberty to resume her natural gait. There she regarded herself free to do just as she pleased ; and as she gave Jane the most minute directions, and went about assisting in making the pies and light bread, with her clean check apron and little black shawl, pinned snugly over the bosom of her plaid linsey dress, with her sleeves rolled up to her elbows, and her cap-ruffle thrown back from her face, revealing her gray

hair, and all the while humming, in a low, gentle tone, some favorite hymn, she looked the embodiment of contentedness and hope.

While these busy scenes were transpiring at the "Retreat," another, quite different in character, though not less interesting, was taking place at another point.

Mr. Lewis was sitting in his office, his feet resting on the Franklin stove, in which the remains of two good dried beech sticks were rapidly passing to smoke and ashes, reading, with intense earnestness, "Buchanan on the Holy Spirit," when he heard a gentle knock at his door. He did not rise from his chair, supposing it was some friend, and turning down the leaf to designate his place, he answered, "Come in." The door opened, and his cousin, young Mr. Holmes, made his appearance. Handing him a chair, and putting his book aside, he commenced a familiar conversation. He observed that his cousin looked unusually sober, and seemed but little inclined to converse on the ordinary topics of the day.

It was the first time they had been together alone since the meeting, and presuming that the occurrences of the previous Sabbath might have left an unpleasant impression on his mind, Mr. Lewis, who always spoke freely and openly to his cousin, said,

"What is the matter, John? you look very sober this morning. What are you thinking about? the occurrence of last Sabbath, or has something transpired in your business to ruffle your usually placid mind?"

He did not answer, but continued to look steadfastly into the fire, while the expression of his face remained unchanged.

"I hope it is nothing serious, John," Mr. Lewis con-

tinued, in a more earnest tone, as he saw that Mr. Holmes hesitated ; “ nothing but what you can tell me, and if in any way I can assist you, I will most cheerfully do it.”

Still no answer, but the same fixed gaze upon the burning embers, and the same thoughtful expression.

Assuming a tone of pleasantry, hoping thereby to arouse him, and tapping him on the shoulder, Mr. Lewis continued,

“ Has your father been scolding you and Grace, and Fannie, John, for not communing last Sunday ? Say, has he brought you before his tribunal to answer for your misdemeanor, or has Hastings been playing the agreeable gentleman again, at your expense ? Come, tell me what it is ; for I am not going to sit here asking you questions, as though I were officially pumping some poor criminal who dreads to make the inevitable disclosure of self-condemnation. Do tell me what it is, if you dare reveal it to a bosom friend.”

“ Well, Ed.,” he at length replied, taking his eyes from the fire, and fixing them upon the young lawyer, with a depth of earnestness in their expression which did not often characterize his face, “ I have called in to talk to you seriously on a subject that you will least expect, I suppose. It is unnecessary for me to waste your time with preliminaries, so I will come right to the point at once. You remember what you said to me the night we were going home from father’s after the discussion ?”

“ I remember that conversation well,” replied Mr. Lewis, his whole manner changing in a moment. His light, playful air of a few minutes before, was followed by one of attentive interest, “ but what of that, John ?”

“Well, Ed., I have been thinking seriously of what you and old Aunt Peggy then said to me, and the more I look at it the more important does it appear to me. I do not know whether you call yourself a Christian or not ; and it does not matter, so that you are able to answer me a few questions. I will state my case as far as I understand it, and then you can answer me more fully and more to the point. As I said, these remarks of yours and Aunt Peggy’s seemed to fasten themselves in upon my mind. It is true I did not think much about them that night, for I was worn out with the business of the day, but as soon as I awoke next morning they presented themselves to me, and the sentiment they contain has never left me since. You remember saying ‘that the strictest morality would never insure happiness ; the soul needs a higher refuge, and that its aspirations ever ascend after something entirely beyond the power of this world to bestow.’ I had before determined, as I then told you, to give up all association with Hastings, and to conform to the strictest rules of the strictest morality. I felt this was necessary for my own honor and to support my position in society, and I also believed it was all that ought to be required of me ; all that the world would ask. But your words, the ‘strictest morality,’ the very thing upon which I had determined to rely, ‘can not insure happiness even for this life,’ are constantly ringing in my ears and through my soul, and I have come to the conclusion they are true ; that we must have something more than the outward semblance in order to enjoy inward peace ; that we must have within ourselves the source of happiness, and not rely upon the world to bestow it upon us.”

"I am glad to hear you express yourself thus interested in a matter that involves so much to you ; not only your well-being here, but also your eternal interests. And as you have set out in the right way, beware of turning back. Let nothing tempt you from your course until you have secured 'the pearl of great price,' an interest in the atonement for sin which was made by the Son of God on Calvary. It would be useless for me to tell you where to go for aid and direction. You know there is but the 'one name' given, whereby you can be saved. He alone can impart guidance to you, alone can bring you from this state of anxiety and dread into the enjoyment of peace and comfort. And you also know that he must be 'inquired of,' and you know the means. Look to him. It is what all must do who hope for an interest in his great redemption.

"But have you said nothing to Cousin Grace on the subject ? She could give you counsel. And it would rejoice her heart to know that you are earnestly seeking for the right way."

"No, Ed., I have not intimated it to Grace, and I don't feel that I can ; and I hope you will not. Wait awhile until we see what the end will be. You must promise me that you will say nothing about it to any body. It would only cause a great deal of wonder and talk through Weston, and would be productive of no good. I have spoken to you thus freely, because I feel that you are a true friend, and not only willing, but able. to advise."

"Rest assured, John, that I shall make no mention of it, if you so desire. And I sincerely hope, now that

you have put your hand to the plow, you will not turn back until the work be accomplished.

"I have just been reading this work," he added, taking up from the table the book he had laid by on his cousin's entrance, "'Buchanan on the Holy Spirit,' and find it interesting and instructive ; and as I am almost through it, you can have it this evening, if you like."

"No, I don't care to read it now ; I may do so hereafter. I have but little time for reading."

The true cause of his refusal, though unwilling to admit it to himself, was this : he had no time for reading but at night, being usually very much engaged during the day, attending to his father's farm and his own family business ; and he did not wish to read a religious work in the presence of his wife, for fear that she might discover that he was interested on the subject of his soul's salvation.

How strange, how wayward is human nature ; thus to wish to hide from those dearest to us the anxiety of our minds concerning that which is of all things else the most important ! But it is so in almost every instance. The preacher, the friend, the neighbor, any one but the wife, the husband, the parent.

It is not because we fear that sympathy will be denied us ! No, no, we feel those loving hearts would overflow with deep solicitude. 'Tis not because we doubt their sincerity and ability to give counsel ; for we have been led, though we may not know it, by their godly walk and holy conversation, first to respect, and then to seek, that religion which their every act commends. It may be that as the light from above shines in upon our minds, revealing the exceeding sinfulness and corruption

of our own hearts, we are made to fear lest those who know us best will have but little confidence in our sincerity.

"Come up to-night, Ed.," said Mr. Holmes, as he rose to leave, "Mr. Miller, you know, will be with us. And I suppose Annie Gray will come with him. Grace will be glad to see you, I know."

Mr. Lewis very well knew that Annie was to accompany Father Miller, for he had the day before received a letter, giving him this information.

"Thank you, John, I will accept your invitation ; for now that the fall courts are over, and I have so little to do, I feel the need of society."

"Come soon, Ed. ; I heard Grace remark to Fannie this morning, at the breakfast-table, that she would have an early supper, that the old gentleman might retire to rest early, after the fatigues of the day."

"I will be up before dark. You know they have to pass by here, and I will be on the *qui vive* for them, and will soon follow in their footsteps."

There was another circumstance which Mr. Holmes did not mention, which had served more to awaken him to a consideration of his duty than any thing that his cousin had said to him. It was a prayer, earnest, pleading, and for him, uttered by his wife, mid sobs and tears, when she believed no ear caught her tones, save that of the All-hearing.

After Fannie had left, the evening previous to the communion, with bewildered and almost bursting heart, Grace had gone to the parlor, there in secret to lay her distress before him "whose ear is ever open to our cry," and who "pitieth us, even as a father pitieth his children."

Mr. Holmes returned from the village, and not finding Grace or Fannie in the family, concluded they had gone to the parlor, perhaps to have a quiet conversation. Intending to give them a little surprise, he passed with cautious step through the dining-room, and carefully opening the door which stood ajar, on tip-toe gained the parlor door. He paused to listen, and the earnest tones of his wife's voice met his ear. He bent his head that he might the more distinctly catch the words. They were these,

"And, O my Father, I beseech thee to bring back my dear husband from his wanderings, and lead him to the Lamb of God, 'who taketh away the sins of the world.' Let him no longer grieve thy Holy Spirit, but may he be brought to see his danger, and be made to flee to Christ for refuge. O wash him from his sins in his blood, that blood which was shed that sinners might be saved."

He stood almost transfixed. These words of fervent supplication, accompanied by the Spirit's power, reached his heart, and found sure lodgment there. And as the deep distress of his wife's heart gushed forth mid sobs and tears, he felt his own melt beneath their influence. He listened till the voice was hushed to silence; and then pierced to the very soul by an arrow from God's own quiver of truth, he retraced his steps, and seizing his hat, left the house in a state of mind almost akin to frenzy. The Past arrayed its page of neglect before him, the Future its page of dread, and he knew not whither to turn.

Grace knew nothing of this; but he who answers prayer in his own good time had overlooked it all—his

eye neither slumbers nor sleeps, but ever watches tenderly over those who put their trust in him.

She arose, wiped her streaming eyes, and passed into her own room. She felt surprised when she saw the packages her husband had brought, lying on the stand, for she had not looked for him back so soon ; it was not his custom to return so early from the village on Saturday evening, and although he promised Fannie to be back soon, she had regarded his words as containing more of jest than earnestness. She wondered he had left the house without seeking her, but then she supposed he had been called away to attend to some business on the farm.

Could she have known the true cause of his hasty departure—could she have but seen the secret workings of his mind, as he passed toward the field ; how would her heart have been filled with thanksgiving to him who was thus answering her many prayers.

After his conversation with Mr. Lewis at his office, Mr. Holmes returned home to dinner. There was nothing in his manner or words that betokened any thing unusual. He might have been more silent than was his wont, but there was none of that severity and restlessness that had characterized him for the past four or five weeks. Grace was very happy to see that the approaching meeting did not add to his moroseness.

After dinner he rode out on the farm, promising to return in time to welcome Father Miller.

“I forgot to tell you, Grace, that Lydia Clarke will be here this evening to meet Mr. Miller and Cousin Annie ; I saw her father in town this morning, who told me that she and James would be here to tea.”

"And did you ask him to bring Mr. Clarke to spend the day with us to-morrow?"

"I did, and he said he would do so."

"Sha'n't we have a nice time, sister?" said Fannie, springing from the table, and throwing her arms round Grace's neck and kissing her; "won't it be delightful?"

"I hope your brother asked Cousin Ed., up to tea? Do you suppose he did?"

"Oh, I guess so. But to be sure, I will run and ask him."

She started to the front door, but as she passed the window, she saw her brother ride away from the stile.

"I wish we knew certainly about this matter, Fannie. I am rather fearful Mr. Holmes overlooked this part of his duty, as he did not mention it to us. Cousin Ed. must be here; I wish I had some one to send for him. Perhaps Mr. Holmes will be back in time to go down."

"How I wish we had some one by whom to send him a note. I fear brother will not be home in time to ride down to the village. Are there none of the boys here, that could run down?"

"No. The dinner was sent to the field to-day, and Jim, the only boy I keep about the house these busy times, has gone over to Farmer Stogden's on an errand for Mr. Holmes, and will not be back until quite late."

"Now isn't this too bad? I have half a mind to run down myself and ask him."

"So you can, Fannie, if you choose, and then we will be sure of his presence to-night; and you may take Jane with you, and send home some mackerel by her. There is none in the house, and Father Miller's tea would scarcely be complete without it. He is so remarkably

fond of salt fish, I intended to send for some by Mr. Holmes, but forgot it when he left this morning. This is just the idea."

"Well, as soon as Jane has leisure, sister, I will go."

"She can be ready as soon as she has arranged her kitchen. She must not be too late, or she will not have time to prepare the fish."

Grace and Fannie assisted Aunt Peggy and Jane in clearing away the table, and cleaning up after dinner ; which, when done, Fannie looking as blooming as a rose, threw on her little green hood and brown cloth mantle, and summoning Jane, who appeared with a nice little willow basket in her hand, and her head enveloped in one of the gayest of Madras handkerchiefs, while her sun-bonnet hung pendant from her arm, and her broad grin displaying an extraordinary extent of native ivory, fully attested her great pleasure at the opportunity to visit the village, which, to her untutored eye, was the *summum* of all excellence and beauty, they set off.

Fannie called at her cousin's office, but he was not in, so she left a note of invitation in a conspicuous place on his table, and hastened to make her purchase.

She soon dispatched Jane home with her basket filled with choice mackerel ; for old Mr. Dobbs, the grocer, would always keep a good article. She then called a few minutes to see a particular friend, Mary Ecton, whom she had known and loved from her infant days, and who had just returned from a visit of some months to an aunt in Ohio.

Mrs. Ecton, the mother of Mary, lived just across the street from Deacon Dodge's, where Mr. Gordon boarded.

Fannie had thrown her veil over her face and bonnet, so as to escape recognition from any of the deacon's family, for she did not wish to be seen calling in the neighborhood, as she had not time to make Delia, the deacon's oldest daughter, a visit, who was also an intimate friend of hers. But with all of her precaution she could not escape the inquiring eyes of the minister, who had an upper front room at the deacon's ; and who, standing at his window as she passed through Mrs. Ecton's front gate, immediately recognized her, notwithstanding her veiled form. As soon as he saw Fannie enter the door at the widow's, he doffed his slippers and *robe de chambre*, and putting on his boots and thick coat, sallied out into the street, and walked past the house in the direction of the "Retreat."

Fannie made but a short call, for she knew she was needed by her sister ; and promising to come again soon and spend the day with Mary, she bade them good evening, and with quick step set out for the "Retreat."

As she turned the first corner of the street, whom should she see but the minister, walking leisurely up and down the pavement. Her first impulse was to turn round and pass on to the next corner, but she saw the eye of Mr. Gordon fixed upon her, and on second thought she decided to go on. As they met she bowed, and was passing without further remark, when Mr. Gordon, wheeling about, said :

"You seem to be in great haste this evening, Fannie ; is there any thing urgent ?"

Without at all slackening her pace, she answered, "Nothing very particularly so, Mr. Gordon ; Sister Grace is expecting Father Miller, and Miss Annie Gray and

her brother, and I wish to get home to assist her in her arrangements."

"As you are alone, Fannie, and I have promised your father to take tea with him this evening, I will walk with you as far as the avenue gate."

Fannie finding that he was determined to accompany her, and not wishing to attract notice, relaxed her gait to one more lady-like.

"Mr. Miller is coming to Weston to hold the promised meeting, I suppose? Do you know when it will begin?" he asked of Fannie, as they walked along.

"To-morrow night he will preach."

"Where will it be held, Fannie? have you heard?"

"I have not. Cousin Ed. has taken this matter in hand, and I have not seen him since he has arranged it. But we have no fear that he will secure a suitable place; either the Court-house or Methodist meeting-house."

"Why, Fannie," exclaimed the minister, evidencing great surprise, "you speak as though you were already identified with the Baptists! Do you feel as you express yourself?"

"Well," she replied, hesitatingly, "I scarcely know how to answer your question, Mr. Gordon," and the blood mounted to her temples, and overspread her face, for she saw, in this interrogatory, the first step toward a conversation which would be exceedingly unpleasant to her, and which she dreaded; "but this I can conscientiously say," she resumed, after a moment, "that as far as I understand Baptist doctrines and usages—and I think I am under no undue bias—my judgment approves them fully, and my heart favors them."

"And you are going to join their church, Fannie ; going to give up your own ?" he asked, timidly, for he feared her response, yet determined to know the worst ; for with him distressing reality was far better than torturing suspense.

"I can not again commune with *your* church, Mr. Gordon ; my mind is fully made up on that point."

She spoke with a decision he had never before seen her exhibit, and he *felt* that she meant just what she said.

"It grieves me sorely, Fannie, to hear you speak so. I do hope you will reconsider the subject, and come to a different conclusion."

"I have weighed the matter well, Mr. Gordon, and this is my decision, after looking at it as clearly, calmly, and comprehensively as I am capable of doing ; it has not been the work of a moment, nor is it the result of mere impulse. In every step I have sought direction from above. And now I can say that I know I have never been baptized, consequently have never been a member of the church, and therefore have no right to the communion."

"But, Fannie, you do not think all Presbyterians occupy the same position ?"

"I certainly do, Mr. Gordon ; I can not believe Presbyterian congregations, although I regard them Christian societies, are regular churches of Christ."

"You astonish me, Fannie ; I could not believe that your preju— opinions, would have carried you so far ! Surely, surely you do this to taunt me ; you are not in earnest !"

"It is not prejudice, Mr. Gordon ; and I speak what I sincerely believe. I look at them in this light, and I

believe it to be a scriptural one. In the first place, I regard a church as a congregation of *baptized believers*, and that no one is a member of the church, or has any right to membership, who has not been baptized; don't you think so, Mr. Gordon?"

"Most assuredly I do, Fannie?"

"Well, in the second place, I believe, that immersion on a profession of faith alone, is valid baptism, and that pouring and sprinkling are the convenient inventions of men, and consequently that there are no New Testament churches but Baptist ones."

"But, Fannie, are not such sentiments very unchristian? are they not very bigoted?"

"I argue, Mr. Gordon, that upon subjects of this kind, every body has a full right to the free exercise of his own opinions. This I would grant to all, for each man is accountable for himself, and not his neighbor; and while I would try to convince, I would never try to force any one to think as I do. Yet it seems to me that Presbyterians are the bigoted sect, and not the Baptists, for they admit that immersion is baptism, yet they will not give up their pouring and sprinkling; they urge Christian communion upon Baptists, and at the same time adhere most tenaciously, yes, I may say obstinately, to the very thing that intervenes between them and the Baptists. Should Baptists give up their close communion; they would, in doing so, yield their baptism; recognizing, in the very act, the validness of sprinkling not only adults, but infants also, for the greater part of your church is made up of those who were sprinkled before it was possible for them to believe. Now, I would ask which is the bigoted, sectarian party?"

Mr. Gordon looked at her with perfect astonishment as she concluded her last sentence. Where had she learned so much of argument ?

"Why, Fannie," he said, in a voice which spoke plainly his wonder, "you fight for your cause like a veteran soldier ; where were you drilled ?"

"O, I have caught up my tactics here and there, as best I could.- I am a raw recruit, and not a disciplined soldier ; but I fight for truth, and would do it valiantly."

"Well, Fannie," and his whole manner changed from surprise to one of anxious earnestness, "I would ask you one question, which I hope you will answer candidly, for I wish to know my fate ; must this difference in religious views ever separate us ? Must it ever prove an obstacle to our union ? Shall it forever deprive me of all earthly hope—all earthly joy ? Say, Fannie, shall this be so ?"

She looked at him a moment, calmly, and then answered, "I can not tell, Mr. Gordon ; I can not decide. You must know that your influence and usefulness as a preacher will be greatly lessened by a union with one of different religious views from yourself. And surely you would not dare to retire from the ministry."

She wondered at herself, that she had sufficient self-control to utter these words ; but she felt she must be faithful, and she seemed to be almost inspired.

"I have sometimes thought," she added in a tremulous voice, after a pause, in which her courage began to forsake her, "that perhaps, after all, you may be a Baptist yourself, Mr. Gordon. I believe if you will give the subject a calm, thorough investigation, you must be convinced that immersion alone is baptism."

"I have determined, Fannie, to sift this matter thoroughly, to examine both sides of the question closely ; for if I am in error, I desire to be convinced ; if I am right, I wish to be able to defend my position against all attacks. I have been reading ' Beecher on Baptism,' to-day, carefully, studiously."

"And what do you think of his views ?"

"O, I can not yet say ; I shall be better qualified to answer you when I have read the work through."

At this point in the conversation, they reached the gate that led to "Mount Airy," and Fannie expected that Mr. Gordon would bid her good-evening, and pass in. But such was not his intention. He had sought this interview for the purpose of ascertaining if she was going to join the Baptist church during the coming meeting, and not being at all satisfied with the information he had already received on this point, he again asked,

"Fannie, tell me, do you intend to join the Baptist church while Mr. Miller is here ?"

"Why, Mr. Gordon," she replied, rather sportively, "there is no Baptist church for me to join ; I know of but six Baptists in all this country, and one of them is old Aunt Peggy."

"And who are the others ?" asked the minister, wishing to know if she included herself and Mr. Lewis in the number.

"Sister Grace, Mr. and Mrs. Clarke and Lydia, and old Mr. Wilkins the cooper."

"Yes, there are others. Here is Mrs. Delaney in Weston."

"Is she a Baptist, Mr. Gordon ? I always thought

she was a Presbyterian ; she attends your church very regularly."

"She has had no other church to go to. But she never communes with us. And I know of two other families in the country, who have been members of the Baptist church, and have their letters ; so you see there will be quite a beginning should Father Miller constitute a church. And I presume he will do so."

"This is the expectation, I believe ; I heard Sister Grace remark, a few days since, that he would bring her letter with him."

"And will you unite with this church, Fannie, after it is organized ? You will forgive my thus pressing this question upon you ; you must know, without any explanation, why I am thus anxious to have it decided."

"Indeed, Mr. Gordon, I can not answer you ; you know that in doing so, I would have to encounter very great opposition. And I am not yet able, to tell what is duty in this case."

"And is this opposition the only difficulty in your way, Fannie ? Is your mind so entirely convinced that you have no doubts, no fears, no misgivings ? Do you not fear that you are too readily giving up your former views ?"

"I have *never* believed in infant sprinkling, Mr. Gordon ; but until very recently, I did not understand the relation communion bears to baptism. But now that I am convinced that communion must follow baptism, and also that immersion alone is baptism, what objection can I have to uniting myself to a Baptist church ? I realize that it is the imperative duty of all who have been led to Christ, and have obtained forgiveness of

sin through his name, to put him on publicly by an open profession of faith in his name, and a submission to his ordinances."

The minister was fully satisfied with regard to her feelings and views. He had entire confidence in her word, and knew that she had not yet decided to act. And the question arose in his mind whether or not he should urge her father's opposition as a reason why she should postpone, and thereby give her present feelings time to become less ardent.

Mr. Gordon was a conscientious man, one who sought to do right in all things. 'Tis true he sometimes erred, and who does not ?

Fannie knew this, and on it she built the hope that if he should ever be led to believe as she did, on the question of baptism, he would confer not with flesh and blood, but would come out and fearlessly avow his change.

"Do you hope, Fannie, that your father will ever grow more lenient in his views than he is at present ?"

"Why should I, Mr. Gordon ? You have heard him say repeatedly that he is a Presbyterian, and expects to die one ; and further, that no daughter of his should ever be immersed."

"But do you not think these feelings will wear out after his present excitement ?"

"I can not expect this. He has always felt as he does now, and I suppose age will but increase his attachment to his principles. You will attend our meeting, Mr. Gordon ?" she asked, as, having seen her through the front gate, the minister turned to leave.

"Yes, as far as I can."

"And may you be convinced," she mentally exclaimed, as he closed the gate and walked away.

The preparation was ended, and Grace and Fannie sat by the front window, chatting away gayly, and finishing a new cap for Aunt Peggy to wear to the meeting; and at the same time keeping an anxious look-out for any vehicle that might turn from the main road through the lawn gate. It was about time for the arrival of the travelers, and they were every moment eagerly expected.

"I hope Mr. Holmes will be home in time to welcome them," said Grace, stitching away most earnestly on one string of the cap, while Fannie plied her needle on the other.

"I am expecting him every minute, sister. You may be sure he will make an effort to be here to receive them. He would regard it a violation of courtesy to be absent, when he has been informed they are coming this evening. I do believe that is he at the front gate now; look and see if it isn't; and see! he seems to be holding it open."

As Grace obeyed Fannie's summons, a rockaway made its appearance at the gate, which she immediately recognized to be Father Miller's. She waited a moment to see if it would not be followed by another, but the gate was closed, and her husband rode up by the side of the carriage.

"And mother did not come?" said Grace, a look of disappointment supplanting the one of joyous expectation, that a moment before had so brilliantly lighted up her face.

"She will be here next week, so don't feel badly, sister."

The cap was instantly rolled up and consigned to the work-basket, and the stand was placed in its accustomed corner, and the two hastened to the front door.

"Father Miller, and Annie, and Tom!" exclaimed Fannie, as the carriage neared the stile.

"We are most happy to welcome you to our home, Father Miller," said Grace to the old man, as she aided her husband to assist him from the carriage.

"And I am most happy, I assure you, Grace, to see you, and to be welcomed to your quiet home," replied the old gentleman, as he shook her hand most cordially, while his whole face beamed with delight. He then gave Fannie a most affectionate greeting at the same time expressing his great gratification at again meeting her.

Annie came out as fresh and blooming as ever, and seizing Grace round the neck, gave her a most telling kiss. She then turned to Fannie, and did likewise. She shook hands with her Cousin John most warmly, but refused the proffered kiss, saying, "O, I don't kiss gentlemen, cousin, Father Miller here thinks it is very wrong;" and so laughing and chatting they passed in. Tom remained to assist Mr. Holmes in looking after his sister's trunk and bandbox.

"What a charming little home you have here, Grace! such a beautiful view in front," exclaimed Annie, as they passed into the hall. "A perfect Eden spot without the serpent! What do you call it, Grace?"

"We have dubbed it 'Retreat.'"

"And pray why the name? I am sure you haven't retreated very far from the busy world. There is Weston in full view, and the public road at your front gate,

and you are but a step or two from Mount Airy I observed as we rode along."

"But it is a quiet little place, Annie, I assure you, for all that ; though it may not seem so to you in your great exuberance."

In a very few minutes after our travelers arrived, Lydia Clarke and her brother James came in, who were very soon followed by Mr. Lewis.

Grace learned from Annie that her father and mother would be with them on Monday of the next week, Mr. Truman having been detained by business that required immediate attention.

It was a happy company, that, around the fireside that evening in the little parlor of the "Retreat ;" and over which Father Miller, seated in the cushioned rocking-chair, presided, as a father loved and loving. There was no restraint, no fear ; but heart answered heart in words of confidence and trust, and eye beamed on eye, bright with the expression of love and sympathy.

Father Miller made inquiry of Mr. Lewis regarding the prospect for the meeting. He was assured that every thing was arranged, the Methodist church having been secured for as long a time as they might wish, and a sexton employed, who, Mr. Lewis guarantied, would attend faithfully to his duties.

"The church is rather inconveniently situated, Mr. Miller, but I suppose all can attend who desire to do so."

"Ah, the situation matters but little, Mr. Lewis. When persons really wish to hear the gospel, they will not suffer such minor considerations to influence them. I rely, Mr. Lewis, upon the power of eternal truth, and not upon good situations and fine churches, and such

outward circumstances. Men want the gospel, Mr. Lewis ; there is a conscious need of it in every breast, which nothing else can supply. They must have it, and they will seek it. Other things may attract for a little while, but their influence will soon be lost ; and what at first was eagerly sought, because it was a *new thing*, will, as soon as the novelty wears off, be cast aside with loathing and disgust. The soul of man can not feed upon such food, it is too material, too gross ; it must have the hidden manna, must drink of living water. Men may be deceived, and even pleased for a time, but the delusion can not always last. Can I but have the Spirit's power accompanying what I say, I ask for nothing more ; for having this, I am armed with a power far above that of man, and shall prove mighty in pulling down the strongholds of sin and Satan, and building up the cause of my blessed Redeemer on the earth."

As the old man spoke, his face grew radiant with the light of faith and trust. Mr. Lewis hung on his words, and gathered from them a lesson of wisdom, never to be forgotten ; in these he saw the key to the old patriarch's great successes.

The hours sped by on rapid feet ; they knew no stay nor tarry, and all were surprised as well as grieved, when Father Miller, taking his watch from his pocket and looking at it, announced the hour of nine.

"You know, my child," said he, addressing Grace, "that this is Father Miller's bed-time. I have to be very regular now in my habits, Mrs. Holmes. It requires strict care for me at my age to manage so as to keep about. I have already numbered my threescore and ten, and the grasshopper is beginning to be a burden."

The Bible was placed on the stand, and the old man making a few remarks upon the many causes for gratitude and thanksgiving which hourly surrounded the path of all present, opened it and read the twenty-seventh Psalm in a low, gentle voice, a little broken by the tremulousness of age. Closing the book he folded his hands, and lined out that beautiful hymn,

"Thus far the Lord hath led me on,"

which all present united in singing.

"Let us pray," fell from the lips of the old man, and with bowed head each one knelt to supplicate the throne of all grace.

It was a short, simple, earnest prayer, that went up from the trusting heart of the man of God—the confession of the creature to the Creator, the returning of thanks to his holy name for blessings past and present, and the beseeching of future good through the merits of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The prayer was ended, the good-night given, and each retired to a pleasant repose.

CHAPTER XX.

THE BAPTISTS' MEETING.

THE appointment for the meeting had been made from Mr. Gordon's pulpit the previous Sabbath, and as it was the first *Baptist* meeting that had ever been held in Weston, the news spread on the wings of the wind far and wide. And many were the surmises among a *certain people* as to the probable results of it. Some thought it must of necessity prove a failure—that ignorant bigoted *Baptists* could never succeed in such an undertaking. They remembered not that when the Lord of Hosts is with a people, "one can chase a thousand, and two put ten thousand to flight." Others, more liberal in their views, thought the very novelty of the thing would at least attract numbers to attend, but they supposed that this would be all, and the meeting would prove only an interruption to the usual order of things in the village. *They* forgot that "the sword of the Lord and of Gideon" can drive the host of Midian from the camp. Others, but they were few, prayed that God would make bare his holy arm in the eyes of all the people, that Zion might awake and put on her strength, and Jerusalem her beautiful garments, that her waste places might break forth and sing together with joy.

Mr. Lewis, who had ascertained all the Baptist families in the vicinity, when it was decided what place they should occupy, informed each one when and where the meeting was to be held.

On Thursday, agreeably to appointment, Mr. and Mrs. Clarke came to dine with their old pastor and young friends at the "Retreat." After a careful consideration of all the circumstances, it was decided to organize a church in their midst, which should hold regular prayer-meetings and necessary business meetings until they could secure the services of a pastor.

Mr. Clarke said, "he knew this arrangement would meet with the approbation of two of the absent families, with whom he had several times conversed on the subject, and who had expressed a great desire that it might be done."

"But where will you worship, Mr. Clarke?" inquired Mr. Holmes, who had listened with the most undivided attention to the development of Mr. Clarke's plans.

"That is the chief difficulty in our way, Mr. Holmes. We know of no place at all suitable for our purpose but the little Methodist meeting-house by the creek, and the court-house."

"And the former you can not get, I suppose, sir, for I have recently understood that the Conference has stationed a preacher at this point, who will enter upon his duties next month."

"Well, then, our only hope is the court-house. What is the probability of securing that, Mr. Lewis, can you tell us?"

"I think, sir, that this can be obtained for Sabbath

services, and that too on very reasonable terms. Indeed, I have no doubt of it."

"If you will use your influence for us, Mr. Lewis, I feel confident that it can be procured," remarked Mrs. Clarke, "and we can, if we deem it best, hold our weekly prayer-meeting at our homes."

"I will guaranty cousin Ed's assistance," said Grace, who had entered the room in time to hear the last remarks; "he will gladly do all he can in our behalf, I know."

The matter was fully discussed; each making such suggestions as he thought would favor the cause in which all present were deeply interested. It was decided that the church should be constituted the following Saturday at 10 o'clock, and that all the Baptists in the town and country should be duly apprized of the fact, that *all* if desirous, might enter into the constitution. It was made the duty of Mr. Lewis to see to getting the court-house as a place of worship until they could make some better arrangements.

"We will be but a small flock, Father Miller; a mere handful."

"But quite enough to claim the Saviour's promise, and blessing, Lydia, 'Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.'"

It was thought advisable for Father Miller and Mr. Clarke to visit all who were known to be Baptists, and to lay the matter before them for their consideration. Also to announce it from the pulpit that night and each succeeding meeting, that any who might hold letters and were not known, could have an opportunity of entering into the covenant.

"And how many Baptists, Mr. Clarke," asked Fannie, "do you suppose are in this neighborhood?"

"Indeed, Miss Fannie, I can't say—not many. Let's see. I will name all I know. There are Mr. and Mrs. Barnett, in the country, and I think their oldest son is also a member of the church, Mr. and Mrs. Haycraft and their daughter, making six. In the town we have Mrs. Delaney, the widow, and old Mr. Williams, the cooper—eight; and here are Mr. Holmes, and my wife, and myself with our two children, and old Aunt Peggy, six—in all, fourteen. A very good beginning."

"Yes, in the constitution of the first church of which I was a member there were but six names."

"And there may be others, Mr. Clarke, that you do not know," remarked Fannie, as deeply interested as any one present. "I have always thought that Mrs. Delaney was a Presbyterian, until a few days since."

"If you are but blessed of God, you have persons enough to form a very good church," said Father Miller, addressing himself to Grace; "we should regard the *quality* far more than the *quantity*."

After dinner, it was arranged that Mr. Lewis, instead of Father Miller, should accompany Mr. Clarke in his visits to the different families. The old man had not fully recovered from the weariness of the previous day's ride, and as he had to preach at night, it was deemed best for him to husband his strength.

The gentlemen found Mr. and Mrs. Barnett, and Mr. and Mrs. Haycraft at home, and not only willing, but rejoiced at the prospect of again being able to enjoy church privileges. They had felt sorely their great privation, and they had fervently besought God to open up

to them a way whereby they could again walk in all the "ordinances of his house." They gladly promised to attend the meeting regularly, and to bring others with them ; also to be present on Saturday to enrol their names in the institution.

The bell of the Presbyterian church, being the only one in the place, was rung to call the people together. This signal had been agreed upon, and was generally known throughout the village. At an early hour the people assembled, some from motives of idle curiosity, others from motives scarcely less culpable—while others went up with sincere hearts to worship God in his sanctuary.

As Mrs. Holmes sat in her chamber, and heard the slow, solemn call to the house of God, she felt her heart go out in anxious longing to assemble herself with his followers. Her thoughts ran back to her girlish days, when, with her parents and sisters, she had gone to the old log church, and there, from the plain, poplar pulpit, had listened to those truths, which, all along life's way, had been her light amid darkness, her strength when ready to faint. Memory pictured the scene so vividly, so clear, and the heart took in its glowing features with sad, yet pleasing delight. "Will you not go to church to-night, to hear Mr. Miller preach?" she said to her husband, looking up from her work, as he entered the door ; "I should be glad to go."

"Tut, tut, Jane ; me go to hear a Baptist ? no, indeed ! The fact of the business is, I am not going to countenance any such doctrine, and set such an example before my children. But if you want to go, Jane, there's Ben and the carriage ; let him drive you down."

"I will wait until to-morrow," she gently answered, and quietly resumed her work.

Fannie accompanied the party from her brother's. Her father, feeling that he had given her orders which she dared not disobey, rested contentedly in the thought, that, as far as she was regarded, the subject of change was finally settled.

The venerable appearance of the minister, with his hoary locks thrown back from his furrowed brow, and his noble form slightly bent beneath the burden of years, attracted the attention of all present, as, rising from behind the high front of the pulpit, he said, in a slow, impressive voice, "Let us pray." Instantly all was hushed; every head was bowed, and each heart felt, as the humble, earnest beseechings were poured out from that full, trusting soul, into the ear of him who ever listens to the cry of his Israel.

A song was sung, and the old man, putting on his spectacles, and bending over the open book before him, read, in notes of peculiar sweetness and power, "God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him, should not perish, but have everlasting life."

The attention which had been attracted by the first words of the speaker was fixed, riveted, as he portrayed the exceeding great love of God to man—that love which prompted him to give his *only-begotten* Son, "the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person," to die the ignominious death of the cross, that man, sunk in sin and wretchedness, might escape the penalty of a law which he had willfully violated, and become an heir of God, and joint-heir with the Lord Jesus

Christ, of that inheritance which is incorruptible and undefiled, and which passeth not away. He also showed man's great need of this love, his utter inability to extricate himself from the woeful state in which his own hand had placed him, and from which neither angel, cherubim, nor seraphim could draw him, only the infinite arm of Jehovah.

He then spoke of the joy and peace of those who had become recipients of this love, had felt *of a truth* "the love of God shed abroad in their souls," and his aged face beamed with an expression of holy gratitude, as he told of its glorious effects on his own soul—how it had always been his stay and solace mid all the dark and grievous trials through which, in God's providence, he had been called to pass, during his threescore years and ten, and how now, that the light of life was fast waning, and he felt he must soon go the way of all the earth, it was to him the sure refuge, the strong support, the all in all. Then, with touching eloquence and power, he entreated those present who had no interest in that love, who had all their life long set at naught the counsel of God, and would none of his reproof, to turn from their evil way, and be reconciled to God, that they too might know the love which passeth understanding.

Perfect stillness reigned throughout the assembly, as the old man's voice ceased. His words had passed like an electric shock from heart to heart, and many who went to look on and laugh, came away deeply impressed with the weight of the truths they had heard.

While the last song was being sung, the old man descended from the pulpit, and as it closed, he rose and said, "My friends, I am a stranger in your midst, an am-

bassador for Christ, sent to bear the messages of my King, to preach to you the unsearchable riches of the gospel of peace. To all, who are in sincerity followers of our Lord Jesus Christ, of whatever name you may be, to you, I come with words of heavenly consolation and joy. To all who are yet in rebellion against the King of kings, I come with words of fearful warning and affectionate entreaty."

These words, how few and simple they were, yet so full of searching power, and their effect was wonderful. All prejudice was overcome, all suspicion allayed, and each heart went out insensibly toward the old man, who in tones of kindness and sincerity had spoken of love and good will to *all men*.

Appointments were made for the following day and night, and a notice given of the intended meeting on Saturday, at 10 o'clock, for the purpose of constituting a church ; and all Baptists present holding letters of dismission, were requested to bring them on that occasion, and become members of that body.

The benediction was then pronounced ; after which, many of all denominations, among whom was Mr. Gordon, came forward to be introduced. The old man received each one with a kind smile and pleasant word.

There was preaching again the next day according to appointment, and notwithstanding many had to look after their daily business, the house was better filled than on the previous evening. At night the attendance was greater still. The invulnerable Mr. Holmes, who regarded himself proof against "all such weakness," by the pleadings of his wife, and the promptings of that

desire for novelty which inhabits every human breast, was led to attend, much to the surprise of his minister and Brother Deacon Dodge, both of whom were present. On being asked the next day his opinion of the sermon, he answered,

"Well, I reckon it will do. The fact of the business is, the old man seems to be in earnest."

And what praise could he have given more? What higher ecomium can be passed on a minister of the gospel, than to say, "that man is earnest in his work?"

And he was in earnest too. For he was preaching "Christ crucified" to sinners "dead in trespasses and sins," "the *only* name under heaven and among men," whereby they could be saved. And that earnestness was accompanied by the influence of the Spirit of truth, and men gave heed to his words. Mr. Ray, who returned home with Fannie, declared he "had never heard such preaching in all his life."

Old Aunt Peggy attended regularly. She could find no words to express her great happiness; she would sit in the corner near the pulpit, and the big tears would chase each other down her sunken cheeks, while her lips unconsciously murmured, "Bless de Lord, bless de Lord."

Grace watched with the most earnest anxiety, the effect upon her husband. "Surely, surely," she would say in the intensity of her feelings, "he will come, God will answer my prayer." But the eye of vigilant love, could discover no marked change. It was true he appeared happier than he had done for months; "but then this is the effect of pleasant company," she said to herself. Old Mr. Holmes was very uneasy indeed,

for fear his son would join the Baptists. He truly desired to see him a consistent member of the church, but he could not bear the thought of his being united with that unlearned people. He gave Fannie a direct charge not to dare to do such a thing, at the same time intimating that the most serious consequences would follow such an act of disobedience. Mr. Gordon was painfully solicitous on her account, but he remained silent, attending the meetings closely, and watching narrowly every movement of her countenance.

At 10 o'clock on Saturday morning they met, and the little church was constituted with thirteen members.

At night the congregation was not so large as usual. There was weekly prayer-meeting at the Presbyterian church, and of course none of their members were present.

"Ye are my friends if ye do whatsoever I command you," was the text. The sermon was close, searching, finding its way to the heart of each listener. There was no escape from his bow, for as a sure archer he sent his arrow to every conscience. Christians wept tears of penitence and joy ; sinners wept tears of conviction and dread. There were no dry eyes in that assembly, for there were no unfeeling hearts. God's Spirit was at work in their midst, and who can resist its influence ? They had met together in his name, and the promised blessing was poured out upon them.

"How sweet and awful is the place
With Christ within the doors."

The whole audience was melted, and sobs were heard

throughout the house as the last words of warning and entreaty fell from the tremulous lips of the aged man of God; while the tears bedewed his cheeks, and the joy of "believing" lighted up his face.

He descended from the pulpit, and announced the proceedings of the morning, and the purpose of the newly-formed church to partake of the communion on the morrow. He then added, "Should there be any present who desire to unite themselves with this little body of Christ's disciples by experience and baptism, an opportunity will be afforded them for doing so while the brethren sing that good old song of allegiance to our Lord and Saviour—

"I'm not ashamed to own my Lord,
Nor to defend his cause."

As the little band rose to sing, Fannie bowed her head on the seat before her, while her whole frame shook with suppressed feeling. Grace, who sat by her, saw, with streaming eyes and throbbing heart, her deep emotion. How she longed to take her by the hand and lead her forward in the discharge of her duty; but she dared not. She could not bring upon the defenseless head of the anguished girl the wrath of an offended father. But she poured forth her soul in prayer that strength might be given her to take up her cross and follow Jesus; that she might be imbued with power from above to cast aside all doubt and fear, and throw herself on his arm, who is a sure helper in every time of need.

A slight movement was observed midway of the house, and a step was heard approaching the pulpit along the

uncarpeted aisle. They looked, and a tall, manly form with composed mien, and calm expression, walked forward and took a seat on the front bench. Grace raised her eyes to see who it might be, and as she caught a glimpse of his face, she exclaimed half aloud, to Annie who sat by her side, "It is cousin Ed., Annie, it is cousin Ed.!"

Fannie caught her words: she could withstand no longer. "I'll go too," she said, and taking her sister's hand, she made her way to the front seat and took a seat by her cousin.

The song was almost ended, when a second movement was heard, and a voice was heard near the pulpit exclaiming in tones of joy and thanksgiving, "Bless de Lord! bless de Lord!"

Grace heard the words of old Aunt Peggy; then she started and looked up. By her side sat her husband, his face buried in his hands. She saw no more, but falling on her knees beside him she wept aloud. Her heart was full, O, how full. God had heard her prayer, and answered it; he had given her her husband: she asked no more.

The hymn closed, yet she knelt. Her husband was reclaimed; she was unconscious of aught beside. She knew not that the eye of man was upon her, she only knew that her husband had taken up his cross to follow Jesus.

The minister asked Mr. Lewis to relate his experience.

He arose, and in a calm, distinct voice, so as to be heard throughout the hushed audience, told the dealings of God with him; how the Holy Spirit had shown to him the sinfulness of his heart—its utter depravity,

in the sight of God, and the justice of the condemnation resting on him because of his unbelief ; how that Spirit had led him to the cross of Christ and there shown him the Son of God in agony and in tears, groaning out his life for sinful man ; and then through faith in the blood of the atonement he had been enabled to lay hold of the promises of eternal life, and had found peace and joy in believing.

“ Brethren, you have heard Mr. Lewis’s statements of what the Lord has done for his soul. What disposition will you make of the case ? ”

It was moved and seconded that he be received for baptism, and the motion carried, the vote being unanimous.

It was now Fannie’s turn to make her statement to the church. There was a general effort throughout the house to get near the speaker. She was known by all present, and her recent course had given rise to a great deal of remark ; some approving of her decision, others condemning her in severe terms.

She composed herself as well as she could, and in a voice often interrupted by sobs, gave her Christian experience, and then stated the reasons why she had forsaken her former views, and wished to unite with that people. The little church gathered around, some sitting, some standing—all eager to hear the convictions that had led to such a result.

As she finished, Grace rose and clasped her in her arms. It was beautiful to see the look of faith and joy which overspread her calm features, as she threw her arms around the neck of the weeping girl. ’Twas such a look as we fancy angels wear, whose hearts are ever filled with the bliss of heaven.

There are but few times in this our earthly pilgrimage that the Sun of righteousness thus arises upon the soul with the glory which is from above. There are but few points in our toilsome journey where we can thus set up our Ebenezer with praise and thanksgiving. There are but few times during our earthly day, that the windows of heaven are thus opened unto us, that the light from the throne may steal around our pathway. We now and then have a foretaste of the joy of heaven to revive our drooping hearts, and impart to us new strength to run with patience the race set before us.

Fannie's was not ecstatic joy; neither was it calm and serene. It had required a great effort—had been an intense struggle for her to take this first step in the onward march, for she well knew it would be a perilous one. But she had heard a voice saying, "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me." She hesitated no longer, for she did wish to go with her Saviour; and she determined to take up her cross, though she knew it would prove a heavy crushing burden which would perhaps well-nigh weigh her to the earth. And then, again, through the tumult of contending emotions, she heard the voice of the Captain of her salvation uttering in her ear these words, "Thou hast done well, thy reward is laid up above. I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee. I will deliver thee in six troubles, and in seven there shall no evil touch thee;" and she was willing to trust the promise; so she girded on her armor, and set out to run the race before her.

The question of her reception was laid before the church, and she was cordially admitted for baptism.

It was then announced that Mr. Holmes had presented himself to unite with the church, and he was requested to rise and relate his experience ; but this he could not do ; and he returned to his seat, and mid sobs and penitential tears, told the exercises of his mind. He spoke of his past life ; first of his conformity to the outward resemblance of religion, then of his utter disregard of holy things. Of the wickedness of his heart, which had prompted him to cast aside the claims of the gospel upon him, and to found a system of morals for himself, which would satisfy the claims of conscience and release him from all sense of obligation to those laws which the word of God recognizes and enforces as our rule of conduct. How his system had proved to him a "broken cistern which would hold no water." He mentioned with deep feeling his efforts to resist the Spirit's influence, but at length the law came, sin revived, and he died. Then it was, he saw himself polluted, defiled, a rejecter of the counsel of God, and a reviler of his holy name. He told of his endeavors to resist those impressions, and how he had partially succeeded ; but at length the Spirit came with power to convict and convert, and he was enabled to cast himself, weary and heavy-laden, at the foot of the cross, where his weary, galling burden of sin had been rolled away, and that peace which passeth knowledge had been shed abroad in his heart by the Spirit of grace. "And now," said he, in conclusion, "I wish to testify to the world the goodness and love of Christ, by putting him on in the ordinance of baptism."

Grace regarded her husband during this recital with the same look of exultant joy which she wore as she

arose from her knees. Her soul was filled with that peace which the world can neither give nor take away.

He was received as the others had been, and when a song was sung, the hand of Christian fellowship was given to the candidates for baptism.

Old Aunt Peggy rushed from her seat as the first words of the song were uttered, and saying aloud, "Bless de Lord, bless de Lord!" made her way through the crowd to where they stood. Going up to Fannie, she seized her in her arms, and all unconscious of where she was, exclaimed as she pressed her to her bosom, "Bless de Lord, Fannie, dear, you 's come out at last, an dese poor eyes has been spar'd to see dis glorus sight. I has nothin' more to ask for in dis world, and I 'se reddy to go now whenever my Massa calls me; dese old eyes has seen his salvation, bless de Lord!"

She then grasped the hand of her young master and shook it warmly. "Our prayers is answer'd at las' Miss Gracy; I told you de flower would be sweet, and so it is, bless de Lord; dey is both gather'd into de Massa's fold at las', an I 'se reddy now to go!"

She then took the hand of Mr. Lewis, and as she shook it she gave him words of advice and comfort, while the tears streamed down her poor old face, and the joy of her soul beamed from her tear-dimmed eyes.

It was announced that the baptism would take place on the morrow at half-past 9 o'clock, so that the candidates could partake of the communion. The benediction was pronounced, and that little assembly dispersed to their respective homes, each heart carrying impressions which were never to be erased.

"You will go with us, to-night, Fannie," said Grace to her as they descended the steps from the door.

"No, sister, I must go home and tell father what I have done. He *must* know it, and I would have no other lips than mine to impart the intelligence to him. Cousin Ed. will go with me. Pray for me, Grace," she said, as she pressed her hand and bade her good-night.

She reached her home, and with trembling footstep entered her mother's room, where she found her parents waiting for her.

"And what of the meeting, Fannie?" her father asked, observing her agitation. "Did any body join to-night?"

"Yes, sir."

"And who were they?"

Looking full into his face as she seated herself by his side, she answered with apparent composure, though her heart was well-nigh bursting,

"Cousin Ed., and brother John, and myself."

If an arrow had pierced his bosom and transfixed him in his chair, he could not have worn a more unearthly expression. He gazed at her as if unable to comprehend the meaning of her words, and for some moments remained silent. Her mother regarded her child with a look of surprise and wonder.

"Did you say that you had joined, my daughter?" she asked, as if she was not sure that she had heard aright.

"Yes, mother, I have joined."

"But you are not going to be dipped, Fannie?" convulsively uttered the old man, partially recovering from his astonishment.

"Yès, sir, I shall be baptized to-morrow morning."

"Well, my daughter," said her mother, as she gazed upon her with feelings that only a mother's heart can know under such trying circumstances, "I know you think you have acted for the best, and perhaps you have, but I should be glad if we had known this was your intention, so that we might have been present."

"I did not know it myself, mother, when I left you ; I did not suppose that an opportunity would have been offered to-night for persons to unite with the church, but when it was given I felt myself compelled to go forward, I believed it my duty, one which God required at my hands ; and you know, mother, we must obey him rather than man."

The old man's surprise entirely swallowed up his anger. To the astonishment of all he listened in silence and made no reply. Reason whispered, "It is done," and for once in his life he regarded her voice.

He heaved a long sigh which pierced Fannie's heart far more deeply than any words of his, however severe, could have done.

"I couldn't have believed it ; a daughter of mine join the Baptist church ! No, no, I couldn't have believed it."

Fannie burst into tears at this manifestation of sorrow on the part of her father.

Turning to Mr. Lewis he said, "And John, too, has joined ?"

"Yes, uncle, he has at last turned aside from the paths of sin."

"I am not at all astonished, Ed., that you have joined—I saw this long ago ; neither am I very much

surprised at John ; but I couldn't have believed that Fannie would have done this thing !”

The cloud began to gather. Mrs. Holmes saw it and led Fannie to her room. The necessary preparation was made for the baptism, and then they knelt side by side, while the mother asked God's blessing to rest on her daughter. She bade her an affectionate good-night, and left her to repose.

CHAPTER XXI.

THE SABBATH-MORNING BAPTISM.

"One of those days to mortals given
To win our souls from earth to heaven."

LONG before the appointed hour, a crowd had assembled at the place designated for the administration of the ordinance. Some present were to witness it for the first time. There had not been a baptism in Weston for many a day ; never since a traveling Methodist preacher had baptized old Mr. Curd, who, though he could hopelessly fall from grace, as he supposed, yet could not satisfy his conscience with any thing short of immersion. To all it was a novel scene, which the position of the candidates served to heighten in interest. And men and women, old and young, masters and servants, had all turned out, each one anxiously desirous to obtain a situation from which the ceremony could be observed.

It was a beautiful spot, the one selected for the baptism. The creek, having passed over a dam a few yards above, spread out at this point, in a smooth, tranquil sheet, whose crystal waters, like a mirror, sent back from its unruffled surface the glorious light of heaven. On the further side from the village, there stretched back from the bank of the stream, a little meadow, now clad in its garment of russet and green, while all along the

edge of the water there stood gigantic old sycamores, whose leafless branches still bent caressingly over the child of their bosom, though they could no longer give her protection from the noon-day sun. Their infancy had looked on a race long since gone ! their age was now to witness for the first time the celebration of a simple rite which had its origin in the far-off wilderness of Judea, and which had been preserved by the faithful followers of their Master, through the fall of nations and the decay of empires, through trials, and persecution, and blood. Surely not one jot or tittle shall pass away till all be fulfilled.

On the side next the village, there was a gradual descent to within a few yards of the edge of the water, where the bank extended itself into a smooth, level plat, from the dam above, to the little foot-bridge a few hundred yards below. Nature seemed to have designed that spot for the administration of the most beautiful and solemn ordinance of the word of God, so admirably was it adapted to the purpose.

The day, too, was a lovely one. Earth, air, and sky, all conspired to throw an additional charm around the impending rite. The sun looked down from the blue heavens above upon the quiet scene below, with a smile of glorious effulgence ; the air wearing that peculiar softness of November, tempered, while it diffused his brightness and his glory. Earth seemed wrapped in holy repose, such as we imagine enshrouded Eden during the sabbath of sinless rest, ere the taste of the forbidden fruit "brought death and all our woe."

"And will you not go to see me baptized, father?" asked Fannie, tremulously, of the old man, as he sat in

the corner, with downcast eyes, and that dark, dreadful frown crowning his brow. She was all ready to step into the carriage.

He looked at her a moment, as if surprised at her question. "Go to see you baptized, Fannie! no, that I won't. I can see no daughter of mine dipped!"

She leaned over him and kissed his darkened brow, while the silent tears coursed each other down her sorrowful cheeks.

"For thee, my Saviour, for thee!" she exclaimed to herself, as, with breaking heart, she turned away. Her mother gently took her hand, and led her to the carriage, which stood ready at the door. Mr. Lewis was awaiting them. He gazed on his cousin with an expression of the deepest sympathy; and, whispering in her ear, "Fear not, Fannie; he will be with you," handed her into the carriage, and, seating himself by her side, they drove to the water.

The minister, with Mr. Holmes and Grace, Annie and her brother, together with most of the little band, stood on the brow of the declivity, awaiting them. Mr. Holmes's countenance beamed with joy and love. His heart was filled with that confidence and hope which lift the soul above the present life, and give to it visions of the unseen glory. His faith was "the substance of things hoped for," the sure evidence of things not seen.

As the little company wended their way down the slope, they sung that stirring song,

"In all my Lord's appointed ways
My journey I'll pursue;
Hinder me not, ye much-loved saints,
For I must go with you.

“Through duty, and through trials, too,
 I'll go at his command ;
 Hinder me not, for I am bound
 For my Immanuel's land.

“And when my Saviour calls me home,
 Still this my cry shall be :
 ‘Hinder me not, come, welcome death,
 I'll gladly go with thee.’ ”

The effect upon the audience was magical. It was hushed to the profoundest silence. Those who had come from motives of curiosity were melted to tears ; those who had come to laugh and jeer, were seized, as if under conviction for sin ; a feeling of awe pervaded the whole assembly. The Spirit of God was in their midst, and they could not, they wished not to deride and mock. Old and young ; men in the noontide of strength and vigor, indifferent and unmoved about their soul's salvation ; young men in life's spring-time, regardless of any duty to God ; matrons and maidens, all were overcome by the impressiveness of the solemn scene ; and tears found their way to eyes that seldom wept.

Still the little band moved on with slow and solemn step ; still their notes of praise rung out on the hushed air.

Fannie leaned upon the arm of Mr. Lewis. Her heart was sad, bowed even nigh to breaking, for on it rested the weight of her father's sore displeasure. Mr. Lewis, whose soul was fixed upon the promises of Jehovah, who felt all the comfort, all the bliss of faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, and all the happiness of entire obedience to his commands—whose every feature bespoke the peace and joy of “believing,” endeavored to

reassure her as they passed on ; but “ a wounded spirit who can bear ? ”

Her soul was racked beneath the conflict of contending emotions ; she felt that she was giving up all of earthly happiness. She was acting in direct opposition to her father’s expressed will ; and that father, bowed down by the grief of her disobedience, had positively refused to see her baptized. She was severing herself from all of her early associations. Those she had known from her childhood days, whose hearts had treasured her with a sister’s love, would now turn from her cold and indifferent ; and there was one far dearer to her than all other friends beside ; one to whom she had given her highest, holiest, earthly love, and she was now about to meet the doom of separation from him—from all she loved. She wondered if he would be there, or would he stay away and thus manifest his disapprobation of her course. She prayed, O so fervently, that God would direct his steps thither, and there convince him by his own mighty power of the obligation that yet rested upon him as a follower of the blessed Redeemer. “ Grant me this, O my Father ! I ask no more ; lead him in the paths of all righteousness for thy name’s sake.”

She leaned heavily on the arm of her cousin for support. She was almost ready to sink beneath the burden of her sorrows. Her mother followed behind her ; her deep sobbings fell upon her ear during the intervals between the words of the song, and pierced her bosom to its deepest depths.

Mrs. Holmes clung to her daughter with that love which only a mother’s heart can feel under such trying circumstances. She did not disapprove the act her

daughter was about to perform; she thought only of the painful, fearful consequences to her affectionate nature. How dark, O how very dark did the future appear as it arrayed itself before her. She fully comprehended her daughter's situation; she knew what must be the effects of blighted hope on a heart so young, so pure, so trusting; and she knew, too, that to all this sorrow would be added that of her father's unmitigated disapprobation. If that father had but come to see his daughter baptized, it would have been some consolation; but he would not. The mother's heart, as well as the daughter's, was well-nigh breaking. - Her faith was dimmed to darkness; she saw the picture in its deepest shadow, and could not realize that light *could* ever gild its blackness.

As they approached the stream the crowd parted on either side, and they passed through to the water's edge. As the last words of the song died away, there was a stillness as of the grave. Lifting up his trembling hands on high, the aged man offered up a short, beseeching prayer to God for his blessing on what was now to be done in his name, that grace might be given to those who were there to testify to the world their love to Christ and their willingness to follow him in all of his commands; to grant to them that "perfect love which casteth out all fear."

And with his went up from the stricken heart at his side, earnest supplication, "Be with me, O my God be with me! Give me strength to do thy will! O take not thy presence from me in this my hour of need! I do it all for thee—in obedience to thy command! I leave father and mother, kindred and friends, all—all to

follow thee ! O leave me not, nor forsake me ! still my strength and helper be ! Support me ! O support me !”

And there came a voice as if from heaven, saying, “Fear not, lo ! I am with you, follow me. I will be thy guide and support ; I bled that *thou* mightst live ; I poured out my soul in death for *thy* redemption. Canst thou not trust me ? Look up, look up, and see me on the cross bleeding, dying, that *thou* mightst be saved. Have I not said, every one that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my name’s sake, shall receive a hundredfold, and shall inherit everlasting life. I have kept thee thus far, and can I not preserve thee to the end ?”

She *could* trust ; she did trust ! And as the prayer closed, she threw aside her vail, and those around her saw her face beaming, as it had been the face of an angel. All fear, all doubt, was gone. “She knew in whom she had trusted.”

Giving her bonnet to Annie Gray who stood by her side, she took the arm of her brother, and followed the minister and Mr. Lewis into the water. As she stood, her hair thrown back from her calm brow, and her hands folded on her peaceful bosom, while a smile of ineffable sweetness and truth lighted up her placid face, she presented a picture of unearthly loveliness. And never, in coming time, did that vision pass from the remembrance of those that saw her. There was one beholder who perceived it in all its intensity and power ; it had burned itself in upon his heart in ever-enduring characters, and often in after years did he revert to it with feelings akin to adoration.

On a slight eminence, and a little way above the stream, and apart from the crowd, there stood a man, his form enveloped in a cloak, and his hat shading his face. No one observed him, for all eyes were directed to the group in the water. But there he stood *alone*, with folded arms and downcast look, while the big tears followed each other down his sorrowful cheeks.

"There are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost, and these three are one. And there are three that bear witness on earth, the Spirit, and the water, and the blood, and these three agree in one.

"And in obedience to the command of my Lord and Saviour, and after his example, I baptize thee in the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Ghost. Amen."

A moment, and Mr. Lewis arose from the liquid grave, to walk in newness of life.

Fannie stood with closed eyes, while her brother submitted to the ordinance which publicly testified his death to sin, and his resurrection to a life of faith and holiness. Her heart was communing with her Saviour, she was tasting of that bliss which the soul feels, when God from off the mercy-seat reveals himself to man.

Her lips moved, but no sound was heard. When it came her turn to be "buried with Christ in baptism," she cast an earnest searching glance upon the crowd; then closing her eyes, she was "planted in the likeness of the Saviour's death," that she might "be also in the likeness of his resurrection."

As she arose, she said, so as to be heard by all near, "I thank thee, O my God, that thou hast given me

strength to do thy will ; praise the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me bless his holy name."

As she reached the bank she was caught in the arms of her mother, who with tears of joy, pressed her to her heart. "Bless de Lord ! bless de Lord !" was heard above the voice of the surrounding weeping, and old Aunt Peggy was seen making her way to where the group stood, exclaiming as she went, "Bless de Lord ! bless de Lord !" She shook the hand of each, while her happy old face was bathed in tears, and her soul too full of joy for aught save praise to God for his great mercy. And as she passed through the crowd, shaking the hand of all she met, her overflowing heart gushed forth in thanksgiving and love.

One and another came forward to extend to them the hand of Christian fellowship and welcome into the church of Christ on earth. The benediction was pronounced, and the little company ascended the hill, singing as they went,

"Jesus, mighty King in Sion,
Thou alone our guide shalt be ;
Thy commission we rely on—
We would follow none but thee.

"As an emblem of thy passion,
And thy vict'ry o'er the grave,
We, who know thy great salvation,
Are baptized beneath the wave.

"Fearless of the world's despising,
We the ancient path pursue ;
Buried with our Lord, and rising
To a life divinely new."

During the meeting, which continued through the following week, others were brought into the fold of the great Shepherd, and became members of his visible kingdom. And often in after years, when the little handful had become a mighty people, and success and prosperity crowned the efforts of their loved pastor, Mr. Lewis, did they assemble at this spot to witness the ordinance of baptism at his hands, but never, *never*, again did their hearts so overflow with praise and thanksgiving, as on that beautiful Sabbath morning, when he and the reclaimed husband, and the faithful heroine were united to their feeble band.

CHAPTER XXII.

THE DEATH-BED.

MONTHS have passed ; changes have been wrought ; hopes have been realized ; death is abroad.

'T is the spring-time. A bright May sun flings gladness over all the earth.

The "little band," yet weak, though increased in numbers, is still worshipping in the court-house, and receiving the truths of the gospel from their devoted pastor, Mr. Lewis.

A new light has dawned on the Retreat. An immortal flower is added to the garden of its love ; soft dew-like eyes meet the young mother's as Grace bends in all the fullness of a mother's tenderness over her first-born. The little Edwin Lewis smiles an infant's smile of innocence from his downy pillow as he receives his mother's kiss on his cherub lips.

Wasted by disease—worn out with the strife of life, a calm, patient sufferer lies upon the bed of death. She knows her hours are almost ended, and as she feels the shadow of death stealing gently over her, her countenance becomes more and more radiant with the light of heaven.

'T is a little cottage room—neat, yet very plain ; its whitewashed walls, and snowy window-curtains, and

nicely dusted chests, and old-fashioned bureau with its bright brass knobs, all attest the hand of care.

In the right hand corner, near the fire-place, stands a low bed with its clean pillows and blue yarn coverlet ; and on that bed lies a resigned sufferer, breathing out her mortal life ; she is sleeping now, for the anodynes have done their work of mercy, and all pain is for the time entirely lulled.

Beside the bed are two watchers, silent, lest the slightest noise might disturb the sleeper. One holds the old attenuated hand in hers, and gently notes the ebb and flow of the well-nigh spent life-current. The other is seated by her side, watching with anxiety every changing expression of the earnest face.

The sleeper awakens, opens her eyes, and looks intently round the room, as if in search of some one whom she had been long expecting. Not finding the object of her lengthened gaze, she asked in a low, feeble voice—

“Hain’t he come yit?”

“No, Aunt Peggy, not yet.”

“An’ won’t he come dis mornin’, Miss Gracey, don’t you think? I wants so much to see him.”

“Yes, Aunt Peggy, I am looking for him every minute.”

“I hopes he will, for I wants to talk wid him once more afore I goes. He’ll surely come, by ’m-by. He never misses a day.”

“Yes, Aunt Peggy, I know he will come,” she answered, bending over her and giving her a cup of cold water. “He will be here I am sure, in a few minutes. Mr. Holmes has gone to town for some medicine for you, and he will come with him.”

"Med'cin's no more use for me, Miss Gracey. I'se almos' done wid dis airth, bless de Lord ; my time is come to go an' be at rest. I tink before de sun sets dis day, I shall be far away from here, in my Massa's house."

"Do you feel any pain now, Aunt Peggy?" said Fannie, approaching nearer, and taking the wasted hand in hers. She looked up as if she did not understand the question.

"Does any thing hurt you, now, Aunt Peggy?" she repeated, bending over her, and speaking in a louder tone.

"No, no, Fannie dear, I feels no more pain now ; it's all gone, an' I think I'll never have any more on dis airth ; an' I'se sure I'll not have any in heben."

As the old woman uttered these words of hope and resignation, they both felt her words were true ; that soon, the spirit which was now so faintly animating that sinking frame, would be released from its clay prison-house, to be for ever at rest in the paradise of God.

Suddenly the words which old Aunt Peggy had spoken to her in the little parlor on the morning of the preparation for Father Miller, flashed across Fannie's mind :—"I feels I shan't be here long, Fannie dear ; dese feeble han's and tottery steps tells me I mus' soon be gone." She had not heeded them at the time, but now they seemed to her prophetic of the present scene.

"Can I do any thing for you, Aunt Peggy?" she asked, as she saw the old servant direct her eye to the little table at the foot of the bed.

"Jest a leetle drop of water, dear ; I feels so hot here," and she laid her hand on her breast ; "an' raise dis ole head a leetle higher, chile, dat I may see him

when he comes. An', Miss Gracey, draw dat curtin a bit to one side to let de light in, for my eyes is a growin' dim. I wishes he 'd come."

Her requests were attended to. She was raised and supported by pillows in the bed so as to have a full view of the door.

"Dat will do, Fannie, dear ; I kin see him now if he comes afore my sight is gone."

Fannie turned aside to hide her grief as the old servant spoke of the unmistakable signs of approaching death. Aunt Peggy had been to her a friend since the day she had first seen the light of earth. She had watched over her as if she had been her own child, and often had her kind hands supplied her childish wants, and her kind words consoled her childish sorrows. And in after years, too, she had given her aid and comfort when her heart was sorely stricken ; had pointed out, in her own homely way, the path to those joys that fade not—that possession which is "undefiled and that passeth not away."

Mrs. Holmes, who had every day come to see the faithful old servant, entered the room. As soon as she caught a glimpse of her face, she read therein the evidences of approaching dissolution. Going to the bedside, and taking up the wan hand, she leaned down, and asked her how she felt.

"I'se almos' home, Miss Jane," and a faint smile for a moment parted her parched lips.

"And are you happy, Aunt Peggy, in the prospect of so soon standing in the presence of your great Judge?"

"Yes, yes, Miss Jane, I'se very happy ; I has nothin

to fear. My Saviour will ans'er for me, when I'se called to give my account. He has died for me, and his death has took away all my sins."

She stopped short for want of breath. Her respiration was becoming gradually more and more difficult. She folded her hands, and, closing her eyes, remained perfectly still for several minutes. Then, looking anxiously up at her mistress, who was still by the bedside, she said, feebly :

"I wishes he would come."

"She speaks of Edwin, I suppose?" said Mrs. Holmes, addressing herself to Grace.

"Yes, she has several times expressed a desire to see him."

Just then, footsteps were heard through the half-open door. The old woman, her hearing apparently rendered more acute by the great anxiety of her mind, seemed to catch the sound instantly, and, turning her head on the pillow, said, in a strong, clear voice :

"He's comin' now ! I hear his step ;" and her eye lighted up with an expression of earnest expectancy.

"An' so you's come at last," she said, looking up into his face, as he stood by her bedside, and making an effort to extend her hand to him. He perceived her intention, and immediately, with the gentleness of a woman, took her wasted hand, and pressed it within his own.

"And how do you feel now, Aunt Peggy?"

"I'se very happy now, Massa Ed. I'se so glad you's come. I thought I shouldn't see you agin, may be, for I'se almos' gone ! I've jes' been tellin' Fannie, here, dat before de sun goes down, I shall be in my Massa's house."

Mr. Lewis felt her words were true. He saw that the spirit could not much longer linger in its frail tenement.

Mr. Holmes mixed the medicine he had brought from Dr. Denny, and offered it to her.

She shook her head slowly. "It's no use now, Massa John ; it won't do no good."

"But take it, Aunt Peggy, it will keep you from suffering."

She reached out her hand in the direction of the cup, but she had not strength to take it. Mr. Holmes elevated her head, and she swallowed about half of the mixture ; and then, as if exhausted by the effort, she fell back upon the pillows. The frill of her cap was thrown back from her forehead, revealing her gray hair ; her gown was opened about the throat, and her bosom was partially bared, for she had complained of a great burning within, which nothing they could give her would allay. One hand rested on her breast, the other lay extended by her side. Not a muscle moved ; her breathing became low and lengthened ; and, as they looked upon her, they felt it must be death. She had remained some time in this state of stupor, while every breath was thought to be her last, when, suddenly arising, she unclosed her eyes, and, fixing her gaze upon Mr. Lewis, who stood next her, she motioned for him to come nearer. He leaned over to catch her words. She seemed to be waiting for him to speak. He put his lips close to her ear, and said :

"Do you feel that his rod and staff comfort you, Aunt Peggy ?"

Gathering up her whole energy, as if for the final

struggle, she answered, in a voice which was understood by all present :

"Yes, yes ; I fears no evil, bless de Lord. De grave has no terrors for me ; and de sting of death is took away ! I can say wid de 'postle, 'I has fought a good fight, I has kept de faith,' and I know dare is a crown laid up for me in heben, which my Saviour will soon place on dis poor ole head."

"Your trust in the Lord Jesus Christ is sure and steadfast, Aunt Peggy ; no clouds to hide his face from you ?"

"No, no ; my Saviour is wid me, an' his smile fills me wid joy. Christ died for poor sinners like me, an' he is willin' and able to save all dat comes unto him."

Her voice failed her so that she could not proceed further, and she remained motionless, with her eyes fixed upon Mr. Lewis, as if desirous of saying something more to him. At length she continued,

"Go on, Massa Ed., to preach the gospel of Christ to sinners ; never give it up. Try to build up de little church, and God will help you."

Her eyes passed from one to another, and rested at last upon Mr. Holmes.

"Go on, Massa John, in de way you has set out ; you, and Fannie, and Miss Gracey. You has all bin kind to me, and I'se sorry to leave you, but I'se goin' home ; and you'll all come arter me soon. Den we shall never part no more. I bid you all farewell," and she moved her powerless hand slightly toward them. Each one approached the bedside, and clasped the death-cold hand, while tears bedewed their cheeks.

"Good-by," she murmured to each pressure.

They watched her, as her breath grew fainter and yet more faint ; a slight shudder passed through her frame —a gasp, and all was still ! Her spirit had gone up to dwell on high.

For some moments not a word was spoken. Each one stood gazing on the lifeless form before them with sorrowful heart ; for she who lay there, wrapped in the mantle of death, had been a friend to each, to all.

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CHAPTER XXIII.

OUR YOUNG MINISTER MARRIES.

MAY roses fling abroad their rich fragrance on the evening air ! May dews glide noiselessly to the newly awakened earth, and lose themselves in her fresh, green bosom. A soft May moon steals above the eastern horizon, and gilds with radiant luster the brow of night. Gentle May zephyrs from their airy home glide over the earth, kissing the lips of the rose, and the tender cheek of the hedge-row violet. Young and tender May leaves whisper to each other tales of love, away, away, in the dark old forests.

And other lips than those of the dancing leaves have whispered tales of love ; and mortal ears have heard its sweet low murmurings ; and mortal hearts have felt its thrilling inspiration, until the soul, fired beneath its ecstatic power, has tasted of bliss which mortal tongue can never say.

In the hospitable mansion of Mr. Gray, all is excitement and expectancy. She to whom their hearts were so closely wedded, the living, joyous Annie, is, to-night, to take upon her the marriage vow. She is to wed the man of her heart's free choice, the object of her pure unsullied love. She is to stand in the presence of God and many witnesses, and promise to love and

cherish, yea as long as life shall last, him upon whom she has bestowed her girlhood's fresh full confidence and affection.

The house is brilliantly lighted throughout, and every thing bears the testimony of free Kentucky hospitality. 'Tis but the twilight hour—early, yet the guests are fast assembling.

Around her in her bridal chamber, through the open windows of which sounds of the merriment below reach their ears, are grouped the tried, loved friends of her youth, and she, who, though not so long known, is yet as highly prized. Grace, and Lydia, and Fannie, they are there to deck her for the altar.

Annie is bright and glad to-night, for the future presents to her bounding heart a rich rare picture of happiness and joy ; and during all the preparation hers is the most cheerful voice, hers the freest smile.

She kneels, that Grace may adjust the bridal vail, with its bandau of pure orange buds and flowers. A slight shudder passes over her, and her face, but a moment before so radiant with joy, assumes a sad expression.

“ Why, my dear girl, what is the matter with you ?” said Grace, who, stooping to fasten the wreath, caught the changed look ; “ you are not excited, are you ?”

“ I was just thinking, cousin, of the time when I was performing this same office for you ; and in a moment a retrospect of all the changes that have taken place since then, flashed through my mind, and I asked myself the question, ‘ And is life such to all ? will it prove thus to me, full of alternating joy and sorrow ?’ ” and she looked up into the face of her cousin with calm in-

quiry, as if she would read an answer, though the lips might not speak it.

Grace paused a few minutes, as if deciding whether or not she should reply, and said :

"Life to all, Annie, has its sunshine, and its shade, its bright and flowery paths, and its wilderness ways, wherein there is no light save that of holy faith. And where this is not found, dark indeed, and thorny, is the pathway our unguided feet must tread. But gloom does not always hover over us. The kind hand of our heavenly Father, though often we recognize it not, directs our groping footsteps, and we are brought again to the sunshine of joy and happiness. There is much to enjoy in this world, much to love, much to be grateful for ; for, there is much that is pleasant, much that is beautiful, much that is merciful and good."

"But how very sad the thought, Grace, that sorrow *must* come to all ; there is *no* way to escape its torturing hand."

"True, Annie, sorrow must come to all, for sin and death are abroad in our earth, and none of us are free from their dominion ; but we should not let dark forebodings of the future, rob us of present enjoyment. It is our duty, as well as our most glorious privilege, to avail ourselves of the blessings of to-day, leaving the trials of the morrow in his hand, who sees what is most fit for us, and who will bestow willingly every needed good, if to him we have yielded up all we have and are."

As Annie went about completing her toilette, she said, "How strange it is that my mind should be so filled with Weston, to-night ! It seems to me I can't keep it out of my brain."

“Not at all strange, Annie, I think,” responded Lydia; “it is so soon to be your home that I do not wonder that it fills your mind. You know we always look to the future, rather than dwell upon the past.”

“But ’tis the past, with its varied scenes, that lingers in my mind to-night. It seems that every incident, however trivial, is before me, dressed in the colors of living reality. All the joyous days, and pleasant evening rides, and walks, and social conversations, and familiar faces, come trooping up before me to claim a share of attention, as if I now had time for their entertainment; and the seasons, too, come with them. But I must dismiss them all, until I have leisure for their company. Shall I find many changes, Fannie? I hope not, for change, of whatever nature it may be, always makes me sad.”

“Yes, you will find changes, Annie, and some of them sad ones; for death has been in our very midst, you know, and some with whom you were familiar, have gone away.”

“Mr. Gordon has recently left, Mr. Lewis told me this morning.”

“Yes, he is gone.”

A change passed over the face of Fannie instantly, at mention of this name. Annie did not observe it, but it did not escape the eye of Grace, who read its full, deep meaning.

From that once sweet, glad face, the girlish innocence and joy had faded out. She had lived years in the last few months; years of patient, uncomplaining sorrow. Each moment, as it passed, had stolen from her heart its sunny light, until now the coming shadows of disap-

pointed hope were beginning to fling their gloom over her soul, and to lend their shadings to her sweet face. She was not sad and spiritless, but subdued, thoughtful, suffering—rendered more holy, more akin to him “who was a man of sorrow and acquainted with grief.” No murmurings ever escaped her lips ; no angry cloud ever darkened her still fair brow ; but the sad, sweet smile, and chastened eye, and gentle, quiet step, and sometimes the half-heaved sigh, told that the heart, though so silently enduring, was nevertheless sinking beneath its heavy burden.

“And why did Mr. Gordon leave, sister ? I thought he was fixed there for many a year to come. I half suspect Fannie could answer my question better than you can, but I am afraid she will not be candid.”

“He assigned no other reason than failing health ; but Fannie and I believe that his conscience had much to do with the matter. We think his mind was ill at ease on the subject of baptism, and so Cousin Ed. thinks. He often freely admitted to us that he had doubts about his having been baptized.”

“And where is he now ?”

“With his sister, Mrs. Sanders, in Richmond, Virginia.”

“And have you heard nothing from him since he left ?”

“O, you must ask Fannie for such information as you may desire with regard to the present condition of his body and mind. She is the only one in Weston who has been favored with an epistolary notice from him.”

“Come, Fannie, dear, tell us does he intend to return to Weston ? I am desirous to know ; I had expected

to number him among my warmest friends in my new home."

"Well, really, Annie, I can not answer you positively; it depends upon circumstances, I suppose;" and a slight blush overspread her pale face as she spoke.

"And may I ask what these circumstances are?" said Annie, looking at her quizzically.

"Should his health be entirely re-established and his mind be relieved of its present doubts, I judge he will come back and resume the charge of the church again. His people gave him up very reluctantly, and he is under promise to return to them as soon as he shall regain his health."

"But suppose, Fan, he should change his views entirely, would he not *then* come back?" and Annie kissed the still reddening cheek.

"O, I don't know, Annie! Why do you ask me? You don't suppose I am in possession of the plan of his whole future life, do you? When we get home again we will write him a letter of solicitation and inquiry. But be still, my dear girl, or I shall not be able to fasten on this berthé becomingly. Remember that, for once, you are to be 'the observed of all observers.'"

"And see, Annie," said Lydia, coming to Fannie's assistance, "it wants but ten minutes of the appointed hour."

"We have been holding a queer kind of a conversation, have n't we? I had *almost* forgotten that I was preparing for the most solemn event of my life."

"Come, my dear, glove those tiny hands, to keep them out of mischief," said Grace, handing her a box of white kid gloves; "and try to grow sufficiently com-

posed to wear at least a quiet air. Brides should be blushing creatures, you know."

The blood rushed to Annie's face until it was almost crimson. In a moment she *realized* fully what she had known, but not felt—that she was soon to be a bride, and that, too, of a minister.

All the depth of feeling of which her pure, generous nature was capable, spoke from her face, as she stood leaning on the dressing-stand, her head resting on her hand.

By nature she was joyous, buoyant, and, at the same time, susceptible of the most intense emotion. Her heart, always free and loving to all around her, had received higher, holier impulses from the indwelling of the Spirit of all truth; new motives actuated her, for she had "passed from death unto life."

She had made no public avowal of this great change; but he who was so soon to take her to his bosom, as his counselor and friend, had read it in characters not to be mistaken, in every word and action. And those with whom she daily associated had sure evidence that the hand of God had molded her heart anew.

What a picture of superior loveliness she was, as she stood there, with her head leaning on her hand, clad in a simple white dress of muslin; her vail partly shading her dark, thoughtful eye, and its gossamer folds offering a beautiful contrast to the heightened color of her cheek. Her only ornaments were the orange wreath and *berthé*, and on her left arm a bracelet, with a clasp containing Mr. Lewis's miniature, which she wore because he had given it to her.

The guests had assembled, and Father Miller was waiting below to give away another of his charge; it

was to him like parting with a child of his bosom. He had known her from her very infancy, and her guileless, happy nature had bound her to him with very strong ties. And now that he could recognize her as one of the fold of the Great Shepherd, the love to her that had always burned in his bosom grew deeper and more intense. But he was resigning her to one in whom he reposed the firmest confidence—one whom he knew would prove faithful to her as long as life should last. And then she was not to be subjected to the trying ordeal through which Grace had been called to pass. But he regretted the loss of her society, for she was a frequent visitor at the country parsonage, and her merry laugh, and kind words had often served to cheer its quiet hours.

Her parents, while they were grieved to give up the daughter whom they so tenderly loved, and who had so long been the light of their household, were solaced by the thought that they were yielding her into the safest hands, and that her happiness would be infinitely increased by the change. Had it been their exclusive right to select for their daughter, from all their friends, Mr. Lewis would assuredly have been the man of their choice.

The expectancy of the company was relieved by the appearance of Mr. and Mrs. Gray, and Mr. and Mrs. Truman, who were soon followed by the bride and bridegroom.

The aged man rose as they entered, and approaching, stood before them.

It was a simple yet beautiful and impressive scene—that little group as it stood, while the aged man of God, in a solemn and touching manner, united in indissoluble

ties the two warm loving hearts before him. The veiled form of the bride, leaning on the arm of him who was henceforth to be her earthly stay ; the calm dignified form, and earnest, we might say, almost holy expression of him who was receiving the precious trust—the bent form, and hoary locks, and tremulous voice of the minister—all conspired to make the scene one of solemn beauty and intense interest.

Congratulations followed, and many were the kisses that pressed the blushing cheek of the happy bride, who with her vail thrown back from her brow and the color playing over her bright face “like moonlight over streams,” looked the very embodiment of grace and loveliness.

Fannie calmly waited till the excitement was measurably over ; and then approaching her new cousin, leaning on the arm of Mr. Ray, gave them each a fervent kiss and her warmest wishes for their future happiness.

Let us for a moment look at Mr. Ray, who for his lasting attachment to our Fannie, deserves a passing notice.

A few months have wrought wonders in his appearance. He is no longer the *recherché à la mode* young man that Fannie described to her brother underneath the old oak, when she said “that he was a decided lady’s man, and knew how to sport a moustache, a cane, and kid gloves, beside being fully acquainted with all the flower-emblems.” He had laid aside that air of painful exquisiteness which then marked his dress and manner ; and in its stead exhibited an appearance of neatness and gentlemanly deportment, which contrasted most strikingly with his former bearing. He, with many

others in Weston, had become a follower of the meek and lowly Saviour, during the meeting held in that place by Father Miller, and had united with the infant church. He was still a devoted admirer of Fannie, notwithstanding his knowledge of her former engagement to Mr. Gordon, who received his attentions as a friend.

The time passed most delightfully to all present. Mr. and Mrs. Gray moved about among their guests dispensing pleasure and enjoyment wherever they went. But the bride and bridegroom were the chief attraction; she, with her naturally exuberant spirits, heightened by the excitement of the occasion, and yet tempered by her husband's dignified cheerfulness; and he, with his fine conversational powers and affable manner, drew around them an admiring crowd wherever they were. The young ladies and gentlemen promenaded and chatted gayly, while the more elderly ones grouped themselves together in different parts of the room for the purpose of social conversation.

There was but one sad heart in all that joyous company. And while there was no despondency visible in her face—nothing there to betray her deep suffering—her heaving heart was busy with the past and future; the present was to her but the passing hour, whose beauty and gladness would leave no trace behind. She received with gentle grace all who were presented to her. Her lovely face, and sweet, winning manner, called forth the admiration of all who beheld her; and many were the requests made of her friends for an introduction. She felt it obligatory upon her to render herself agreeable to all who sought her acquaintance, and none

but her bosom friends could appreciate the effort it cost her.

How often it is that a cheerful exterior hides an aching, bursting heart. We learn to subdue the body, but the spirit we can not control; and while we smile, and wear the semblance of joy, the hand of grief is slowly and painfully pressing out from our souls every element of peace and happiness. The outer life is read by our fellow-man, the inner life is known only to God.

There was one thing that supported her amid the whirlwind and storm of disappointment and persecution—for her father had not become reconciled to her change—and that was a voice rising above the din and strife, which said, “Come unto me, ye weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest.” She obeyed the bidding, and faith, over the deepest darkness, threw sunbeams of heavenly light.

Supper was served in liberal, handsome style; and Mr. and Mrs. Gray, assisted by Mr. and Mrs. Truman, attended to the wants of their guests in the most obliging and attentive manner. And when the hour arrived for the company to disperse to their respective homes, each one went away happy in the thought of having passed a most agreeable hour.

Mr. and Mrs. Gray accompanied their daughter to Weston the day after the wedding, when they met with a most welcome reception from Mr. and Mrs. Holmes, who had provided an evening entertainment for the bridal party, and had called together many of their friends.

They remained several days, during which time they saw their daughter nicely and comfortably ensconced in a neat little brick cottage, situated in a very pleasant part of the village, and which was henceforth called "The Parsonage."

Annie, or, we should rather say, Mrs. Lewis, united with the little church of which her husband was now the almost idolized pastor, on the Saturday after her marriage. It had been so arranged by Mr. Lewis, that they should be married on Tuesday previous to their church meeting, that she might thus soon cast her lot among his people. She was welcomed with warm hearts and affectionate greeting ; and when, on the following morning, her husband led her down into the stream, where but a few months before he had followed Christ in baptism, they received her from the liquid grave, a member of the household of faith, a laborer with them in the vineyard of the Lord.

CHAPTER XXIV.

TWO YEARS HAVE PASSED—WE LOOK AGAIN, FOR THE LAST TIME, ON WESTON.

Two years have run their silent round, and we come to look once more on the quiet shades and pleasant haunts of Weston, and the few familiar friends we there have met, before we say to it and them, a farewell forever.

O, Time ! thou mighty change-worker ! What object, in all this universe, is free from the impress of thy fearful hand ! And who can stay the ravages of thy onward march ? None, none ! Before thy awful coming, nations fade away and are not ; empires, kings, and thrones, sink into the nothingness of the past, when thou dost breathe upon them the fiat of thy relentless will. Massive pile and sculptured column, and polished shaft, which did proudly lift aloft their noble fronts, are leveled in the dust, as thou, with ever-onward tramp, dost shake them to the center. And man, frail man, before the glance of thy stern eye, falls prostrate, never more to rise until thou, a hopeless captive, shalt be chained to the chariot-wheels of Eternity.

We stand in silent awe before thee, thou dread spirit of decay and death ! Yet we would also praise, as well as fear ; for, although thou art a fearful desolator, thou also art a builder-up. And while thou dost hew out

sepulchers, and dig deep, dark graves, thou dost also drape them with earth's most beautiful foliage, and cause them to send forth flowers of rich perennial fragrance. Thou dost clothe the shattered pile with the ivy and the vine, and o'er the ruined column wreath a garniture of beauty. And more than this, thou dost bind up broken hearts, whose every throbbing of anguish grows less intense beneath the soothings of thy hand. And far more than this—than all—thou art hastening on that glorious period when, as the rapt prophet predicted, "swords shall be beaten into plow-shares, and spears into pruning-hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more."

"And they shall teach no more, every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord, for they shall all know me, from the least even unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord; for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more."

"For the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea."

"And a highway shall be there, and a way; and it shall be called the way of holiness; the unclean shall not pass over it, but it shall be, for those; the wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein."

"No lion shall be there, nor any ravenous beast shall go up thereon, it shall not be found there; but the redeemed shall walk there."

"And the ransomed of the Lord shall return and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads; they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away."

And this kingdom of peace and righteousness had been gradually extending itself among the people of Weston, since that beautiful Sabbath morning which witnessed the baptism of three of our principal characters.

The little band which then assembled in the court-house, because no other place could be obtained, had greatly increased in numbers and influence, and through the active exertions of their pastor, aided and forwarded by his people, they have erected a neat, comfortable, and tasteful house of worship, in one of the most eligible situations in the village ; and they are now meeting regularly from Sabbath to Sabbath, to receive from him the words of everlasting truth. And he, true to the trust imposed on him, and feeling the great responsibility of his office, studies the word of God earnestly and prayerfully, that he " may show himself approved unto God, a workman that need not be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth," that he might give to each a portion in due season. And she who, on that lovely May evening, took upon her the solemn obligation of sharer of his joys and sorrows, and helper in all his labors of love, has faithfully kept that marriage vow ; and by her true, unaffected piety, and kind, generous nature, has won the confidence and love of all the people of his charge ; and is regarded by them as in every way worthy of the high position she fills as the wife of their pastor.

The little parsonage, a perfect picture of neatness and sobriety, has, too, its " well-spring of joy," in the living form of " little Nora," whose childish prattle is just beginning to make sweet music to her mother's ear.

And over " The Retreat " too, hovers the spirit of

peace and holiness. No more torturing anguish, no more perplexing doubt, no more gloomy fears, nor hours of anxious watching. The husband and the wife in sweet communion, are together journeying on to the "better country." They have erected the family altar, and morning and evening these devoted children of the Most High meet around it to commend themselves and their darling ones, the little "Edwin Lewis," and the baby "Grace Truman," to his care and protection.

How great is the transforming power of the religion of the meek and lowly Saviour! Under its influences the proud heart is humbled, the obdurate are softened, the vile and the wicked are made holy. The most evil passions are subdued, the most fiendish violence conquered, the most intense hatred changed to love. And sinners "dead in trespasses and sins," are quickened and made alive, having implanted in their souls the seeds of righteousness and true holiness; and from bondsmen and slaves, they become "heirs of God, and joint heirs with our Lord Jesus Christ."

Let us take a parting glance at "The Retreat" before we bid a final farewell to the loved inmates.

'Tis the evening hour. The duties of the day performed, they gather round their pleasant hearth, with cheerful faces and happy hearts. The all-guiding One has led them through another day of their earthly pilgrimage, and to-night they "pitch their tent a day's march nearer home." 'Tis the same room, still unchanged in its furniture and arrangement, in which, more than two years ago, we found Grace sitting, awaiting the return of her husband from the discussion on baptism. With thrilling brow, and aching

heart, she *then* sat through the painful hours of her watching. Now with sweet calm face, and her soul overflowing with love and gratitude, she sits beside her husband, while the glad hours steal by on weary wing. Now, as then, the same snowy curtains drape the front windows; and the little stand is there in its wonted place, with the work-basket, and newspaper, from which her husband has been reading to her the weekly news, to which she, with deep attention has listened, while her needle has been busily plied on the little cross-barred muslin apron she is making for the baby. "Little Grace," with her flaxen hair and deep blue eyes, and look of angel innocence, lies sleeping in the cradle, at her mother's side. And ever and anon the mother's eyes leave her work to rest on that cherub face.

In its accustomed corner, near the end window, we find the table with its covering of cherry and black, on which rest the books and periodicals. The lounge is in the corner by the fire, looking so snug and cosy, with its dark calico spread, which has supplanted the white dimity one, because "Eddie" will sometimes make it his play-place when his mother is out. And then, too, the little fellow must have his evening nap, now that the days are growing so much longer, and the calico spread shows the defacings of rumple and soil so much less than a white one. The nicely made bed retains its counterpane and pillows of virgin purity, for the little pet has no such elevated aspirations as ever making that his resting place. "Snooks," Eddie's great admiration, is quietly purring in the corner, having lost all reminiscences of the past day's evils at his master's hands, in a most satisfactory doze. The mantel clock ticks on; on.

never weary of reminding them that time is going, going.

Mr. Holmes has laid by the paper that he may play with Eddie, who, standing on his knees, is pulling his father's nose, regarding it no doubt a most wonderful object, and every now and then, for variety's sake—children too love variety—making believe that he is going to poke his finger in his father's eye, that he may see him wink ; when the little fellow throws back his head and laughs most heartily at his cunning trick. He doesn't intend to put his finger in his father's eye, not he ! He is only making believe. "Is not the child father to the man ?"

At last he grows weary of the sport, and tells papa "he's seepy." And Mr. Holmes with great tenderness, and a slight degree of awkwardness, for he has not yet become a proficient in baby-nursing, lays him on his lap, and sings him "Rock-a-by baby on the tree-top," until he falls asleep, and dreams of little babies like his "sister Gace," in their cradles away up among the big tree-tops.

The mother takes him, and gently exchanging his plaid dress and white apron for his night clothes, tucks him away to sleep, impressing a kiss on his soft rosy cheek. She then resumes her work ; she and her husband talk of the future of that boy, their hopes and fears, until the hour comes for them to seek repose. The work is put aside, and the Bible is placed on the stand. A chapter is read, a few verses sung, and side by side they kneel to offer up a prayer of praise and supplication.

Surely "the angel of the Lord encampeth round

about" that dwelling ! Surely they shall be kept in perfect peace ! their minds are stayed on thee.

Mr. Robinson has returned to Weston, and has charge of Mr. Gordon's church. He is at home among the people to whom he formerly preached with so much acceptance ; and now that Mr. Gordon has written word that he can never again resume the relation of pastor to them, they look upon the old minister as theirs as long as strength shall be given him to break to them the bread of life.

But death has been at work ; and some whose eyes were bright, and step firm, when we first met them on the occasion of the reception of the bridal party at Mount Airy, have turned aside from the busy haunts of men, and "made their chamber in the silent halls of death."

'Tis the calm, still hour of evening. "Silence like a gentle spirit" is brooding over the quiet earth. The glorious beams of the setting sun are throwing their soft effulgence over the peaceful village and the surrounding landscape. How beautiful, how holy, every thing appears. 'Tis the time when meditation walks abroad and holds communion with the universe of God ; and the soul, filled with the glory of the ever-unfolding vision, exultantly exclaims, "O, Lord, how manifold are thy works ! in wisdom hast thou made them all ; the earth is full of thy riches."

The laborer, his daily work done, is returning to his quiet home. The evening breeze is out at play, gently swaying the tender boughs of the old oaks and elms, and bending caressingly the green spires of the fresh meadow-grass and the young and shooting corn-blades.

Earth is wrapped in a mantle of holy stillness and beauty.

A maiden, clad in the garments of mourning, bends her way to the little garden grave-yard, where, beneath two grassy mounds, repose the ashes of those she loved in life, and whose memories, now they sleep in death, are enshrined in her heart's purest, holiest temple. Her head is bowed, her step slow and gentle; on her face rests an expression of deep grief, kept in subjection by firm, trusting faith. She looks as one who has passed through the deep waters of sorrow, yet they have not overwhelmed her. The flames have been round about, but they had consumed only the dross, and purified the fine gold. Resignation, such as mortals only wear, when by "patient continuance in well doing" they are brought to rejoice in afflictions through him who ever strengtheneth us, marks the calm, lofty brow, and the thoughtful, earnest eye.

'Tis Fannie, and she has come to bid farewell to the graves of her father and little Neddie, for to-morrow is her bridal morn, and she is going far away to make her home among strangers.

Old Mr. Holmes did not live long to be troubled by what he always deemed his daughter's disobedience. In less than a year from that Sabbath morning when she bent over him to kiss his flushed cheek, as she bade him farewell to repair to the place of baptism, she had stood by his bedside and kissed his pale cheek, and spoke the last farewell ere his spirit went to its reward on high. And little Neddie soon followed. Then the mother's heart, O, so desolate! had clung to her with that tenderness which a widowed

mother's heart alone can feel for a loved and faithful daughter.

And she was now about to tear herself away from that fond mother ! to bid adieu to all the cherished associations of her girlish days. But she was going with one to whom she had given even a holier love than that she felt for her idolized parent ; and she had, too, this consolation, that her mother would find in Grace one who would be to her a true, warm friend ; and would, as far as it was possible to do so, soon make amends for her loss.

She has come once more to kneel where she had so often knelt beside the myrtled graves, to commune with her own soul, and to offer up a fervent petition to God to give her strength and guidance for the future.

Long she sits beside the mounds, while memory brings before her the shadows of the past, and mingles their changing light with the gray dawning of the future. She sees it all—the whole scene as it unfolds before her mental vision. Every step of the way, however rough and thorny, is marked by the goodness and mercy of his hand who chastens but in love. Every disappointment brought her nearer and nearer to him who gently folds the tender lambs of the fold in his bosom ; every trial has strengthened her faith ; every sorrow has brightened her hope ; every affliction has increased and intensified her love. And now as she looks back upon the way she had trod, she sees that the Angel of the Covenant has ever hovered over her, sealing unto her the “sure mercies” of God's promise to his people.

She had often groped in darkness, it is true, but the

light of his countenance was removed that he might afterward shine in upon her soul in the brightness of his most excellent glory, that she might be made to exclaim with David, "Thou hast redeemed me, O Lord God of truth," therefore "I will be glad and rejoice in thy name."

She kneels and prays, while tears of holy memory and trust bedewed her uplifted face. Then plucking some myrtle-leaves and flowers, and reaching from the apple-tree at the head of the graves some half-blown blossoms, she presses them to her bosom and returns to the house. These were kept as mementoes of the spot rendered sacred to her heart by the ashes of the dead. And often, in after years, in her distant home, did she look upon them with feelings of tenderness and affectionate remembrance.

Mr. Gordon is this evening expected in the village. He is to return to claim as his bride the one to whom he had given his all of earthly love, and whose memory has ever lingered with him mid all the mental struggles through which he has passed ; since standing on that eminence apart from the assembled crowd, he had seen her, a vision of unearthly beauty, buried with Christ in baptism. From that morning until he also decided "to be planted in the likeness of Christ's death, that he might also be in the likeness of his resurrection," his mind had been distracted with the most conflicting doubts and fears. Like Dr. Alexander of Princeton, he "*had fallen into doubts respecting infant baptism,*" and sprinkling as baptism. Diligently, prayerfully, and with heart-felt desire for truth, he has sought all the information he could gain on both sides of the question ; and like

others who have desired to know the law of the Lord perfectly, a Carson, a Judson, a Noel—he has come to the true knowledge of the truth as it is in Christ Jesus, and throwing aside the strong bias of early teaching, the attachments to the church in which he had been brought up, and all other extraneous influences, he has renounced his former views forever, and publicly attested the sincerity of his new convictions by a willing submission to baptism, and has united himself to a Baptist church in Virginia, to which, owing to the death of their former pastor, he was now preaching.

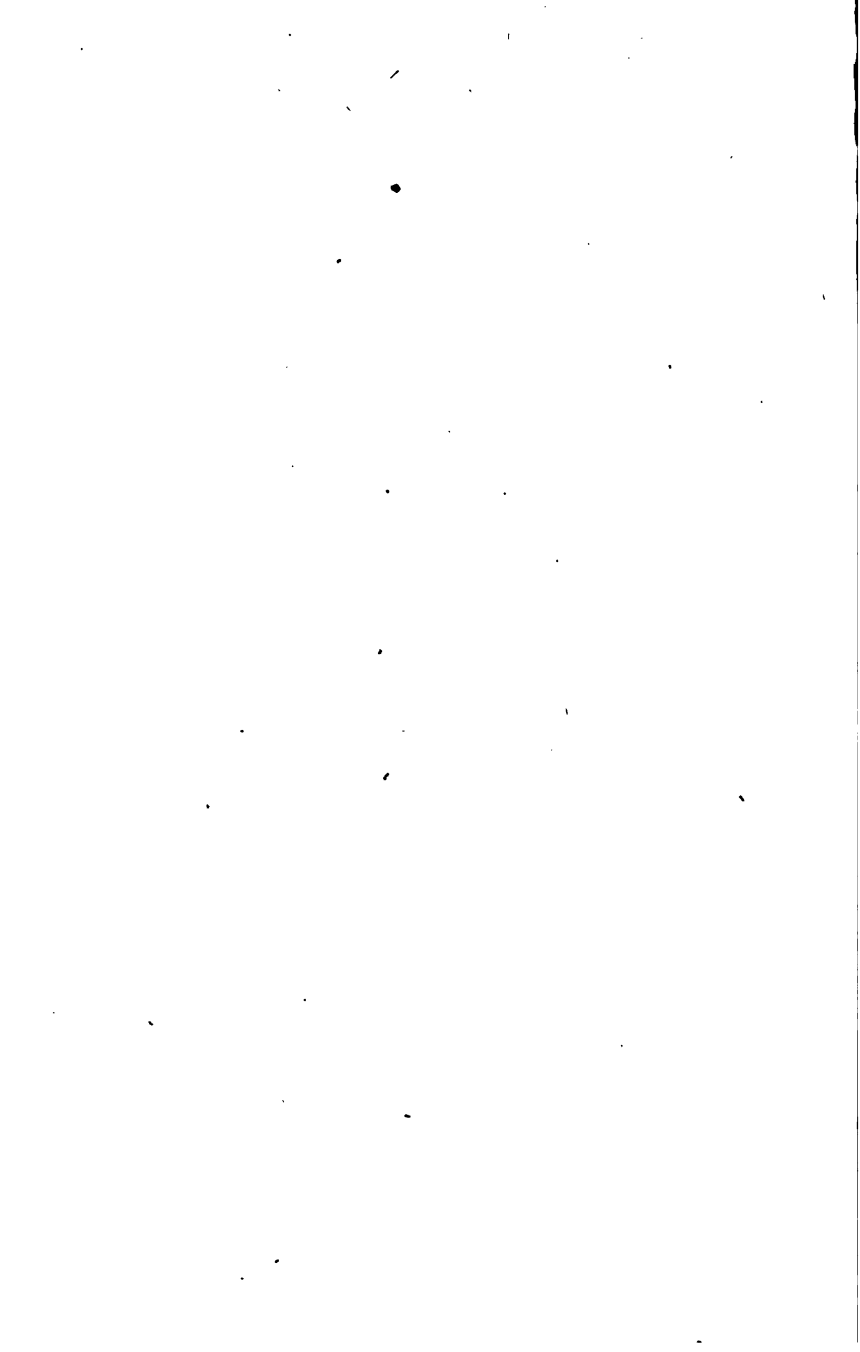
The morning came. A few friends assembled to witness the ceremony which was to make one, these two whose hearts had so long been wedded in love, and who had been sundered by a sense of the high obligations which rested upon them as followers of him who has said, "He that taketh not his cross and followeth after me, is not worthy of me."

As Mr. Gordon could not be long absent from the people of his charge, it was arranged that they should set out on their journey immediately after the marriage.

Fannie appeared dressed in deep mourning, and ready for the trip before her. Mr. Lewis performed the solemn ceremony. It was a scene of peculiar tenderness and beauty, for each one present knew and loved her, who in her purity and faith was yielding up to another the claims which had been theirs. Every eye was filled with tears, every heart bowed with sorrow, as the minister prayed God's blessing to rest upon those who had given themselves to each other in the sacred covenant of marriage.

Refreshments were partaken of, and bidding adieu to the loved ones whom she was leaving behind with sorrowful hearts, she stepped into the carriage, and giving a last long look at her old home, she turned to seek a new one with him who was henceforth to be her earthly stay, and by whose side she was to tread the paths of life, being with him a co-worker in "the vineyard of the Lord."

THE END.



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Extract from the Annual Report of the Superintendent of Public Schools, of the State of Michigan, for the year 1851, Page 101.

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"Having examined 'Webb's Normal Readers,' we believe them to possess many advantages over any other series of Readers which has come under our notice, and would therefore recommend their introduction into the schools of Binghamton.

"A. D. STOCKWELL, A. W. JACKSON, Trustees of District No. 2.

"GEORGE PARK, R. S. BARTLETT, Trustees of District No. 1.

"T. R. MORGAN, WILLIAM E. ABBOTT, Trustees of District No. 4."

"DEAR SIR—I have examined 'Webb's Normal Readers,' and consider the system superior to any now in use. Respectfully yours,

"H. G. PRINDLE, Town Sup't. Common Schools, Norwich."

At a meeting of the Town Superintendents of the County of Chenango, held in the village of Norwich, on the 16th of August, the following resolution was adopted:

"Resolved—That we consider the uniformity of text-books a matter of infinite importance to our common schools; and believing 'Webb's Normal Readers' to be superior in many respects to any extant, for teaching the principles of reading, and instilling sound moral principles in the minds of the scholars, we therefore recommend their general adoption in the schools of the county."

From the City Superintendent of Schools, Utica, N. Y.

"DEAR SIR—Having somewhat carefully examined 'Webb's Normal Readers,' I have no hesitation in saying I consider them to rank high among the best Practical Readers that have come under my notice. We have lately introduced two numbers into some of our public schools of this city, which have thus far given good satisfaction.

"D. S. HEFFRON."

From Mr. A. CRAWFORD, Principal of Union School.

"Port Huron, July 7, 1856.

"The box of Webb's Readers were received, and have been introduced into my school. After a thorough examination, I have not been disappointed in their excellency, and am satisfied that they are the best Series of Readers that I am acquainted with."

Books Published by Sheldon, Blakeman & Co.

From Professor E. O. HAVEN, of Ann Arbor.

"With regard to the 'Word System,' adopted in Webb's Primary Reader, I have not seen it applied to the *experimentum crucis*; but if it does anything to relieve the torture of both victim and teachers, often attending the old system, it certainly ought to be used. Were I a teacher in that department, I should certainly try it, and I do believe it would succeed. But the book, and all the books in Webb's Series of Readers, are most beautifully and perfectly adapted to their purpose. I deem them the best fitted to interest, and thus to profit, pupils of every grade, of all that I have examined; and as one of the Committee on Text-Books, in the Union School of Ann Arbor, shall earnestly advise their use in that institution.

E. O. HAVEN, Prof. of Eng. Lit. in University of Mich."

From D. M. BEERS, Principal of Hudson High School.

"Hudson, Mich., May 24, 1886.

"I have fully adopted Colton and Fitch's Geographies, Webb's Readers, and Stoddard's Arithmetics; all of which are now fully established as the text-books on those subjects in my school. I might make more extended remarks in reference to the merits of the works, and my preferences, but deem it sufficient to say that I have adopted them, and use and prefer them to any with which I am acquainted."

"Monroe, Mich., June 6, 1886.

"This is to certify that Stoddard's Series of Arithmetics and Webb's Series of Normal Readers, and Miles's U. S. Spelling Book, are the established text-books in all the district schools of this city, on those subjects.

F. JOHNSON, Director of Dist. No. 2"

From Mr. P. S. HENSDRDT, Principal of Public Schools.

"Saginaw City, June 10, 1886.

"We are using Webb's Series of Readers, and think them superior to any other; and we are convinced that teaching by the Word Method is the only true way. Taking the whole series, we do not think that any improvement can be made in Readers, or any could be gotten up better adapted to the wants of our schools."

From E. W. CHESBRO, Principal of Union School.

"Grand Rapids, Mich., May 24, 1886.

"The day and age of the world in which a scholar is put through a year of alphabet, preparatory to reading, is entirely past, and that teacher who is so utterly regardless of the time of his pupil, or so entirely ignorant of his own duties, as to pursue the old method of teaching the young in their first efforts to read, is totally unqualified for his position. You may think this is strong language, but having seen and felt some of the evils of the old system, I am confident it is no stronger than is deserved. As invaluable aids in the Word Method of teaching, I would say that Webb's Normal Cards and Series of Readers have been in use for the last six or eight years, and I have thought that the author should have a monument nailed to his memory in every school-house in the land, and benedictions breathed upon his head from every fireside in the land—so much, in my opinion, has he done for the rising generation. We use the Normal Cards, Primers, First and Second Readers. Stoddard's Arithmetics are, without exception, unqualifiedly good, and worthy of introduction into every school in the State. We have adopted the Series."

From Mr. A. L. BINGHAM, Principal of Union School.

"East Saginaw, Mich., May 8, 1886.

"Webb's Series of Normal Readers are used in Union School No. 1, Township of Buena Vista, East Saginaw, Michigan. They are not only exclusively used, but give entire satisfaction to all the teachers in our school, as being superior to any other series with which they are acquainted. We are to set in operation two Primary Schools, branches of our Union School, in the course of two weeks, in both of which Webb's Series will be exclusively used. This Series not only gives satisfaction to the teachers, but also to the pupils and parents. As to 'Intellectual Arithmetic,' a class was formed last winter, soon after I came here, numbering twenty; the class still pursues its lessons, as one of great interest. We have also classes in Colburn's; it was here when I came, and I let it remain for the least advanced pupils, while the most advanced use Stoddard's 'Intellectual.'"

From J. P. BEERS, Principal of Select High School.

"Burr Oak, Mich., May 6, 1886.

"We have introduced Webb's Series of Readers, except the 5th, and Stoddard's Intellectual and Mental Arithmetics. Stoddard's Practical Arithmetic I have examined, and I consider it better adapted to the wants of our public and primary schools than any other arithmetic now in use. It has many advantages over our other arithmetics, in giving a thorough practical knowledge of business transactions. I have not yet introduced it in my school, but shall do so soon. I am very much pleased with Webb's Readers."

